

Summary of 2015 General Session Scorecard Bills

HB002 PUBLIC EDUCATION BUDGET AMENDMENTS (Sanpei/Hillyard)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

HOUSE: 63-10-2

SENATE: 29-0-0

This is the annual budget bill. As UCN mentioned at the beginning of the 2015 General Session (see UCN Newsletter 2/10/15 <http://us6.campaign-archive2.com/?u=80ece188fc614385a25c65402&id=a43b2bf72e>) the premature announcement by some that charters were in danger of losing their stable revenue stream was not correct. Throughout the session, UCN worked with legislative leadership, appropriations, and sub-appropriations chairs to extend the Oct. 1 protocol for another year while the legislature discusses charter funding in detail through the authorization of HB444 Charter School Funding Task Force. The base budget WPU was increased in this bill. The new "standard" WPU is \$3,092.

This bill supplements or reduces appropriations previously provided for school districts, charter schools, and certain state education agencies for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015, and ending June 30, 2016, and modifies related budgetary provisions. (source: Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel, OLRGC)

This bill extends, for an additional year, a provision that allows the number of weighted pupil units assigned to a charter school to be based on the higher of: October 1 enrollment in the current school year; or average daily membership in the prior school year plus growth; provides budget increases and decreases for the use and support of certain state education agencies; provides budget increases and decreases for programs that support school districts and charter schools; provides intent language; establishes the value of the weighted pupil unit for fiscal year 2015-16 at: \$2,837 for the special education and career and technology add-on programs; and \$3,092 for all other programs. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

HB068
STUDENT PRIVACY STUDY
(Anderegg/Stephenson)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

HOUSE: 69-0-6

SENATE: 27-1-1

Privacy of sensitive student information is a fundamental fiduciary function of LEAs. The State Board of Education is the ultimate depository of millions of pieces of private student data and as such has the responsibility to make sure student records are handled with extreme prudence.

This bill requires the State Board of Education to develop a student privacy-funding proposal and make recommendations to the Legislature. (source: OLRGC)

This bill requires the State Board of Education to develop a funding proposal and make recommendations to the Legislature on how the State Board of Education and the Legislature can update student privacy laws in statute and in board rule; requires the State Board of Education to designate a chief privacy officer; and requires the State Board of Education and the chief privacy officer to report to the Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

HB119
CHARTER SCHOOL FINANCE AMENDMENTS
(Last/Stephenson)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

HOUSE: 45-27-3

SENATE: 21-7-1

Several years ago, UCN Executive Director Kim Frank, worked closely with legislative leaders to establish the Local Replacement Fund (LRF). LRF provides a compensatory amount for charter schools that they don't receive through the ability to assess local property taxes like the 41 districts do. As part of the LRF program, districts statewide were required to provide funding from their local revenues equal to 25% of those revenues on a per charter school student basis. However, the original funding formula was flawed and some districts have not been paying the total 25% per state law. HB119 provides for the correction of that flawed formula.

This bill modifies funding for charter schools. (source: OLRGC)

This bill requires a school district to allocate 25% of district per pupil revenues for each student of the school district who is enrolled in a charter school regardless of the charter school students' average local revenues. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

HB124
EDUCATION BACKGROUND CHECK AMENDMENTS
(Handy/Millner)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

HOUSE: 71-0-4

SENATE: 25-0-4

Appropriate security measures for adults who work closely with students is important to the well-being of public education and the charter school movement.

This bill modifies provisions regarding criminal background checks. (source: OLRGC)

This bill defines terms; clarifies and amends background check provisions for licensed educators and employees or volunteers who work at local education agencies and certain private schools; amends the Public Safety Code to allow certain qualifying entities to request that the Bureau of Criminal Identification within the Department of Public Safety (bureau) register fingerprints taken for the purpose of conducting a criminal background check with certain systems; amends background check provisions for charter school governing board members; requires an entity that is authorized to request a background check under the provisions of this bill (authorized entity) to register fingerprints of certain individuals with certain systems for ongoing monitoring; requires the bureau to notify an authorized entity when a new entry is made against an individual whose fingerprints are registered with certain systems regarding any alleged offense or a conviction, including a plea in abeyance; removes the requirement that a local education agency or qualifying private school require certain individuals to periodically submit to a criminal background check; provides that authorized entities may only consider certain offenses when making employment, appointment, or licensing decisions; requires certain individuals to self-report criminal history information to authorized entities in accordance with rules established by the State Board of Education; requires the State Board of Education and the bureau to collaborate to provide training to authorized entities; requires the State Board of Education to update certain rules; requires a local school board or charter school governing board to update certain policies; requires the Legislative Auditor General to issue a report. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

HB186
STATE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERSHIP ELECTION AND
AMENDMENTS
(Gibson/Vickers)

UCN Position: SUPPORT (with exception)

HOUSE: 55-19-1

SENATE: 19-5-5

Although UCN's Board remains neutral on the "partisan" aspects of this bill proposal, the Board does see the benefits of clarifying the Constitutional provisions that became problematic during the last State School Board election cycle. Whereas, a Utah judge found that certain aspects of the procedure related to the appointment of individual candidates by the Governor to the ballot for consideration by the voters were unconstitutional, UCN's Board believes it is appropriate for the voters of Utah to consider the Constitutional Amendment for school board elections on the next ballot. The outcome of that ballot proposal will determine the future appointive/elective process for USBE members.

This bill provides for partisan election of the members of the State Board of Education and provides for appointment of the members of the State Board of Education if the voters pass a constitutional amendment permitting appointment. (source: OLRGC)

This bill provides for partisan election of the members of the State Board of Education and provides for appointment of the members of the State Board of Education if the voters pass a constitutional amendment permitting appointment; removes the nonvoting members from the State Board of Education; increases the compensation of members of the State Board of Education; modifies the reporting requirements of state board office candidates and officeholders; reverses the modifications described in the preceding paragraph if the voters pass a constitutional amendment permitting appointment of members of the State Board of Education; repeals provisions relating to election of state school board members if the Legislature or the voters do not pass the constitutional amendment described in the preceding paragraph. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

HB197
EDUCATOR LICENSING AMENDMENTS
(Coleman/Adams)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

HOUSE: 42-22-11

SENATE: 16-12-1

HB197 allows for the hiring of qualified professional individuals for administrative and/or supervisory positions in public education. Despite the lack of a traditional teaching or administrative credential/license, some individuals may be highly qualified as educational administrators. These individuals should have access to appropriate employment in educational fields.

This bill modifies provisions relating to educator licensing. (source: OLRGC)

This bill requires the State Board of Education to make certain rules regarding administrative or supervisory licensing. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

HB198
STRENGTHENING COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS
(Arent/Urquhart)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

HOUSE: 53-9-13

SENATE: 25-1-3

The UCN Board feels that strengthening the system relative to career and educational counseling for secondary students, will provide a stronger, more effective candidate for employment and college entrance following a student's successful completion of high school (etc.). Counselors better prepared for assisting students to this end is a worthwhile commitment by the Utah taxpayer, and Utah's education system in general.

This bill creates a program to provide grants to local education agencies for professional development for school counselors. (source: OLRGC)

This bill defines terms; creates the Strengthening College and Career Readiness Program, a grant program for local education agencies, to improve students' college and career readiness through enhancing the skill level of school counselors to provide college and career counseling; directs the State Board of Education to: develop a certificate for school counselors that certifies that a school counselor is highly skilled at providing college and career counseling; award grants to local education agencies, on a competitive basis, for payment of course fees for courses required to earn the certificate; make rules; and report to the Education Interim Committee. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

HB203
TEACHER SALARY SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS
(Last/Stephenson)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

HOUSE: 49-18-8

SENATE: 21-7-1

Adding Computer Science teachers to the existing list of eligible teachers to receive enhanced funding in highly-qualified areas of instruction is appropriate.

This bill amends provisions related to the Teacher Salary Supplement Program. (source: OLRGC)

This bill amends the definition of an eligible teacher and a qualifying educational background; changes the entity that distributes money for the Teacher Salary Supplement Program (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

HB207
EDUCATOR TAX CREDIT STUDY
(Eliason/Millner)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

HOUSE: 46-20-9

SENATE: 21-6-2

Providing a tax credit for personal funds expended by an educator is appropriate. The legislature will provide a study to determine the implementation of this tax credit.

This bill requires a study related to a tax credit. (source: OLRGC)

This bill defines terms; and requires the State Board of Education to conduct a study related to a tax credit for educator expenses. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

HB213
SAFE TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION AND DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP IN
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
(Stratton/Stephenson)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

HOUSE: 61-13-1

SENATE: 23-1-5

Governing boards should ensure the safe usage of software and technology provided to students by their schools. Each school should provide appropriate, well-fashioned policies to address usage and maintenance of the school's technology on and off campus. Adequate filtering of Internet services purchased by the school must be considered in the purchase of all student systems. Each school should appoint a "council" to advise the governing board on all technology matters.

This bill amends and enacts provisions related to educational technology, school community councils, and charter schools. (source: OLRGC)

This bill requires a school district or charter school that purchases educational technology to ensure that adequate on and off campus Internet filtering is in place; requires a school community council to fulfill certain duties related to safe technology utilization and digital citizenship; requires a charter school governing board, or a certain council established by a charter school governing board, to fulfill certain duties related to safe technology utilization and digital citizenship. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

HB282
ONLINE EDUCATION PROGRAM AMENDMENTS
(Daw/Stephenson)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

HOUSE: 44-25-6

SENATE: 18-8-3

Expanding online education needs throughout the state provides for this additional option to provide electronic delivery of curriculum to charter and traditional students.

This bill expands the entities that may offer secondary school level courses through the Statewide Online Education Program. (source: OLRGC)

This bill allows a program of a higher education institution that offers secondary school level courses exclusively online to offer the online courses through the Statewide Online Education Program; and authorizes an institution within the state system of higher education, including a college campus of the Utah College of Applied Technology, to offer secondary school level courses through the Statewide Online Education Program. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

HB337
CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION COMPREHENSIVE STUDY
(Cunningham/Urquhart)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

HOUSE: 56-14-5

SENATE: 27-0-2

Following the advancement of years of CTE education and funding, it is appropriate to mandate a study specific to the success and costs associated with the CTE program. Conclusions and findings of this study will assist state policymakers in addressing the future needs of this program.

This bill creates the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Board and provides for the CTE Board to conduct a comprehensive study. (source: OLRGC)

This bill creates the CTE Board within the Department of Workforce Services; describes the membership of the CTE Board; requires the CTE Board to conduct a comprehensive study; and requires the CTE Board to make recommendations. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

HB345
EDUCATION ABUSE POLICY
(McCay/Osmond)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

HOUSE: 72-0-3
SENATE: 23-0-6

Student abuse is a tragic practice. Students need to feel safe in the education environment. Reporting of abuse in the educational environment must be done for the protection of both students and educators. Proper guidelines, policies, procedures, reporting, and records associated with abuse must be handled with proper care and consideration.

This bill modifies provisions related to school personnel employment and licensing procedures and student abuse reporting. (source: OLRGC)

This bill modifies requirements for providing and obtaining employment and disciplinary history of school personnel; modifies requirements and procedures for educator licensing; gives rulemaking authority to the State Board of Education; modifies provisions related to mandatory reporting of student abuse. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

HB360
UTAH EDUCATION AMENDMENTS
(Christensen/Dayton)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

HOUSE: 53-17-5
SENATE: 15-10-4

Charter schools are required to create and maintain educational operations and strategic plans. The state should be required to do the same. LEA and state plans should consider the overall direction and goals of the state system of education. The state should address its educational needs in relation to federal mandates and Constitutional provisions.

This bill enacts provisions related to statewide education policy and planning and amends provisions related to national education programs and state academic standards. (source: OLRGC)

This bill enacts provisions related to statewide education policy; requires the State Board of Education to: generate a report regarding the history of the state public education system; create a 10-year plan; and report to the Education Interim Committee; removes nonvoting members from the State Board of Education and requires the State Board of Education to meet quarterly with certain individuals; amends provisions relating to academic standards established by the State Board of Education and curriculum in public schools; provides for certain education entities to meet certain requirements when establishing certain national programs or standards. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

HB363
SCHOOL LAND TRUST PROGRAM AMENDMENTS
(Cunningham/Urquhart)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

HOUSE: 65-0-10

SENATE: 26-0-3

This proposal increases the amount an LEA may receive annually from SITLA proceeds—from 2% to 3%. Although a charter school was previously required to organize a “council” in order to receive and expend SITLA funds, this bill requires a charter school to create a “Charter Trust Land Council” in order to receive and expend SITLA funds. This new statutory structure closely reflects the organization that has been required in past years.

This bill amends provisions related to the School LAND Trust Program and school community councils. (source: OLRGC)

This bill defines terms; amends provisions related to the elements that a school community council is required to evaluate in developing a school improvement plan; provides that a charter trust land council that is not a charter school governing board is subject to certain open and public meeting requirements; provides that the School LAND Trust Program may be funded at a higher percentage in proportion to the amount of funds provided for the Minimum School Program. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

HB444
CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING TASK FORCE
(Gibson/Millner)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

HOUSE: 67-0-8
SENATE: 22-1-6

Kim Frank, UCN's Executive Director, worked closely with Rep. Gibson and other key legislators during the session to encourage the passage of this charter school exploratory funding task force. Charter schools have existed for over 15 years now in Utah. Charter school funding is a patchwork of "fixes" by legislative mandate (the same could be said of any budget segment of state appropriations). However, now with over 100 charters statewide, it has become necessary to "drill down" and figure out whether charters are funded equitably. This task force is a step in the right direction to discuss and restructure proper charter funding.

Charters have been assured by legislative leadership that we will be a vital part of this funding discussion. Kim has been the one constant on Utah's Capitol Hill for over 15 years. Lawmakers recognize this fact, and respect her institutional knowledge and experience.

This bill creates the Charter School Funding Task Force. (source: OLRGC)

This bill creates the Charter School Funding Task Force; provides for membership of the task force and compensation for members; and specifies duties and responsibilities of the task force. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

HB447
PROTECTIONS ON PARENTAL GUIDANCE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
(Dee/Adams)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

HOUSE: 40-31-4

SENATE: 21-7-1

Because human sexuality instruction is the primary right and responsibility of parents/guardians, having an opt-in "gateway" for students receiving sexuality curriculum and instruction is logical and legally necessary—for the protection of the student, the parent, and the school.

This bill amends provisions related to human sexuality instruction in public schools.
(source: OLRGC)

This bill requires a school to obtain prior written consent from a student's parent before the school can provide human sexuality instruction to a student; at a parent's choosing, requires a school to: waive a student's human sexuality instruction requirements; or provide a student with a reasonable alternative to the human sexuality instruction requirement; and provides that a student's academic or citizenship performance may not be penalized if a parent chooses not to have a student participate in human sexuality instruction. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

SB001
PUBLIC EDUCATION BASE BUDGET AMENDMENTS
(Stephenson/Eliason)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

SENATE: 28-0-1

HOUSE: 56-17-2

SB001 establishes the "baseline" budget determined by last year's appropriation. HB002 establishes the value of the weighted pupil unit for fiscal year 2015-16 at: \$2,837 for the special education and career and technology add-on programs; and \$3,092 for all other programs—an increase of \$111 for CTE/SpEd WPUs, and \$120 per WPU for all other programs.

This bill appropriates funds for the support and operation of public education for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015, and ending June 30, 2016. (source: OLRGC)

This bill provides appropriations for the use and support of state education agencies; provides appropriations for the use and support of school districts and charter schools; sets the value of the weighted pupil unit (WPU) initially at the same WPU value set for the 2014-15 fiscal year: \$2,726 for the special education and career and technology add-on programs; and \$2,972 for all other programs; sets the estimated minimum basic tax rate at .001416 for fiscal year 2015-16; and provides appropriations for other purposes as described. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

SB004
CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR SUPPLEMENTAL PUBLIC EDUCATION
BUDGET AMENDMENTS
(Hillyard/Sanpei)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

SENATE: 25-0-4

HOUSE: 74-0-1

This bill provides the annual "backfilling" for appropriations related to shortfalls and program overruns from last year's education budget (SY2014-2015). The state's fiduciary responsibility to assist in Constitutionally balancing the budget, is what makes Utah the most well-managed state in the nation for several years running.

This bill modifies education funding for school districts, charter schools, and certain state agencies for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014, and ending June 30, 2015, and modifies related budgetary provisions. (source: OLRGC)

This bill appropriates funding to school districts and charter schools for educator salary adjustments and the teacher salary supplement; implements transfers to administration for central services at the State Office of Education; and balances appropriations among revenue sources and funds. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

SB029
SCHOOL PLANNING AND ZONING AMENDMENTS
(Vickers/Cunningham)

UCN Position: SUPPORT (with exception)

SENATE: 26-0-3

HOUSE: 68-0-7

Last year during the 2014 legislative session, UCN's position was AGAINST this sponsor's bill proposal. Throughout the legislative Interim 2014, charter school representatives worked closely with the sponsors to find common ground. Charters maintain autonomy (similar to school districts) related to facilities building practices; however, charters will provide additional helpful information (non-binding) to local governments for their review and comments. These review comments are provided by local governments on an "advisory" basis.

This bill amends the notification requirements for a public school to a local government if the public school intends to acquire a school site or construct a school building. (source: OLRGC)

This bill requires a school district or charter school to: meet with a local governmental entity about a proposed acquisition; provide certain information regarding the acquisition to the local governmental entity; and submit a rough proposed site plan to a design review committee; requires a design review committee to provide comments on a rough proposed site plan; authorizes a local governmental entity, in certain circumstances, to request a traffic study. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

SB060
AMERICAN CIVICS EDUCATION INITIATIVE
(Stephenson/Eliason)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

SENATE: 15-8-6

HOUSE: 46-26-3

This law requires all candidates for high school graduation to take and pass a basic civics exam before they can receive a diploma. Civics education and basic comprehension of U.S. Government process and history is an important feature of a well-rounded graduate.

This bill requires an individual to pass a basic civics test as a condition for receiving a high school diploma or adult education secondary diploma. (source: OLRGC)

This bill defines terms; requires a public school student to pass a basic civics test, or alternate assessment, as a condition for receiving a high school diploma; requires a student enrolled in an adult education program to pass a basic civics test as a condition for receiving an adult education secondary diploma; specifies the number of correct answers an individual must provide to pass a basic civics test. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

SB097
PROPERTY TAX EQUALIZATION AMENDMENTS
(Osmond/Last)

UCN Position: AGAINST

SENATE: 20-9-0

HOUSE: 43-31-1

Although the legislature has the ability to tax Utah citizens in order to fund public education, many lower and middle income Utahns are struggling financially. Student fees in secondary schools are at an all-time high. Rising tax rates will drive Utah residents out of state, thus increasing education funding burdens to fewer taxpaying residents. Tax burden for public education is further being shifted to property tax owners without the additional benefit to raising the WPU (because of this tax).

This bill makes changes related to school property taxes and funding. (source: OLRGC)

This bill defines terms; creates the Minimum Basic Growth Account; amends the calculation of the school minimum basic tax rate; requires a certain amount of revenue collected from the minimum basic tax rate to be deposited into the Minimum Basic Growth Account; distributes money deposited into the Minimum Basic Growth Account to fund the state's portion of the voted levy guarantee, the Capital Outlay Foundation Program, and the Capital Outlay Enrollment Growth Program. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

SB116
PUBLIC SCHOOL DROPOUT RECOVERY
(Osmond/Gibson)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

SENATE: 28-0-1

HOUSE: 64-8-3

Certain guarantees to successful completion of graduation requirements are being considered in this proposal. In order to ascertain the actual cost of public education instruction, schools will provide for drop-out recovery services to help students who fall short to complete their educational programs.

This bill provides for public school dropout recovery services. (source: OLRGC)

This bill defines terms; requires a local education agency to provide dropout recovery services; under certain circumstances, requires a local education agency to contract with a provider to provide dropout recovery services; requires a local education agency and the State Board of Education to report on the provisions of this bill. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

SB145
PHYSICS EDUCATION PROPOSAL
(Stephenson/Eliason)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

SENATE: 22-2-5

HOUSE: 66-3-6

Higher education and job-market experts have identified shortfalls in candidates needed to fill future jobs in STEM related markets. In an effort to project future demand for STEM employees, the STEM Action Center will be charged with the responsibility to provide the legislature with data to prove this assertion—specifically in Physics.

This bill requires the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Action Center Board to make recommendations to the Legislature related to physics education. (source: OLRGC)

This bill requires the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Action Center Board to develop a proposal to promote physics education; specifies goals for a physics education proposal; and requires the STEM Action Center Board to report to the Education Interim Committee. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

SB168
CIVICS CENTER AMENDMENTS
(Bramble/McCay)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

SENATE: 26-0-3

HOUSE: 67-3-5

Charter schools may be used as Civic Centers, just as traditional public schools.
Charter schools may receive reasonable compensation as identified on the school fee schedule.

This bill provides for charter school buildings and grounds to be used as civic centers.
(source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

SB175
SCHOOL SAFETY AND CRISIS LINE
(Thatcher/Eliason)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

SENATE: 25-3-1

HOUSE: 70-1-4

Charter schools and their students have access to a statewide School Safety and Crisis Line.

This bill establishes a School Safety and Crisis Line. (source: OLRGC)

This bill defines terms; requires the University Neuropsychiatric Institute, within the University of Utah Hospitals and Clinics, to establish a statewide School Safety and Crisis Line; removes the sunset provision for the School Safety Tip Line Commission and renames it the School Safety and Crisis Line Commission (commission); amends the membership of the commission; requires the commission to fulfill certain duties; requires the State Board of Education to revise certain policies and curricula; requires a local school board or charter school governing board to revise certain policies. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

SB196
MATH COMPETENCY INITIATIVE
(Millner/Gibson)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

SENATE: 25-1-3

HOUSE: 54-20-1

Math competency standards are consistent with the state's mandate/need to provide well-qualified post-secondary candidates following graduation.

This bill enacts provisions relating to public school mathematics competency standards.
(source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

SB204
PARENTAL RIGHTS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION AMENDMENTS
(Osmond/Cunningham)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

SENATE: 26-0-3

HOUSE: 54-19-2

Parents are the primary fiduciaries of their children's rights. Despite the fact that schools provide a substantial oversight to student and their daily activities, the State of Utah (and its political subdivisions—schools) recognize the parent/guardian's right to petition the public education system regarding the conditions and circumstances related to their student's education. Parents and educators must work together for mutually beneficial outcomes in the state education system.

This bill amends provisions related to certain rights of a parent or guardian of a student enrolled in a public school and provisions related to achievement tests. (source: OLRGC)

This bill defines terms; limits the grade levels of a student that is subject to a parent's or guardian's right to retain a student on grade level; amends provisions related to a parent's or guardian's right to excuse a student from attendance for certain purposes; amends provisions related to a parent's or guardian's right to excuse a student from taking certain tests; provides that an accommodation to certain rights of a parent or guardian may only be provided if the accommodation is consistent with federal law and a student's Individualized Education Plan, if applicable; and requires the State Board of Education to make rules providing that scores on certain tests may not be considered in determining a student's academic grade or whether a student may advance to the next grade level. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

SB222
DIGITAL TEACHING AND LEARNING PROGRAM PROPOSAL
(Stephenson/Gibson)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

SENATE: 19-6-4

HOUSE: 47-22-6

Utah schools are nationally recognized as innovators in technology implementation in the classroom. In an effort to provide continuing support and a plan for future technological expansion throughout public education, the legislature has requested the Office of Education to establish a task force to study the needs of technology and develop a statewide plan and budget.

his bill requires the State Board of Education and UETN to develop a digital teaching and learning program proposal and provide technical support to LEAs. (source: OLRGC)

This bill requires the State Board of Education to establish a digital teaching and learning task force to develop a funding proposal for digital teaching and learning in elementary and secondary schools; requires the State Board of Education to develop a master plan for a statewide digital teaching and learning program; requires the Utah Education and Telehealth Network: to conduct an inventory of the public education system's current technology resources; to perform an engineering study to determine the technology infrastructure needs of the public education system to implement a digital teaching and learning program; and as funding allows, to provide infrastructure and technology support for school districts and charter schools; and requires the State Board of Education and the Utah Education and Telehealth Network to report to the Education Interim Committee and the Executive Appropriations Committee. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

SB227
CHARTER SCHOOL REVISIONS
(Henderson/Stanard)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

SENATE: 22-0-7

HOUSE: 67-0-8

Some charter schools are struggling in their operations. Other high performing charter schools are doing very well and are willing to “absorb” those struggling charters. Currently there is no clean statutory way to provide for a high-performing school to assimilate a school that wishes to cease operations. Schools may close, or schools may continue to limp along; however, there is a provision in this bill for the continuation of a weak charter “within” a well-established school. This option makes sense for students who wish to continue attendance in “their” school while under the oversight of a state recognized high-quality charter school and administration.

This bill amends and enacts provisions related to charter schools. (source: OLRGC)

This bill defines terms; and allows a charter school authorizer, in response to a request of the governing board of a charter school and subject to certain conditions, to: terminate the school's charter; and transfer operation and control of the charter school to the school district where the charter school is located or to a high performing charter school. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

SB235
EDUCATION MODIFICATIONS
(Niederhauser/Last)

UCN Position: SUPPORT (with exception**)

SENATE: 19-5-5

HOUSE: 43-29-3

UCN's Executive Director, Kim Frank, worked very close with Senate President Wayne Niederhauser on the only bill he ran this year. The intent of this bill is to provide resources for schools that continually rank lowest on the school grading spectrum. School turnaround experts are assigned to certain low performing schools to provide extended resources in areas such as governance, finances, curriculum, and professional development. Also, this bill provides for monetary rewards for schools that experience growth and achievement under the turnaround program. The state legislature earmarked \$7 million (on-going) for this program, as well as \$1 million one-time funding.

** Utah Charter Network's board believes the philosophy and concept of assisting struggling district and charter schools with state funds is an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars. The board also believes that the "turnaround experts" are best provided by resources within the State of Utah. The board considers the employment of federal "experts" for school turnaround unnecessary and inappropriate.

This bill enacts and amends provisions related to public education. (source: OLRGC)

This bill defines terms; requires the State Board of Education to designate low performing schools, subject to certain conditions; requires a local school board to take certain actions to turn around a low performing district school; requires a charter school authorizer and a charter school governing board to take certain actions to turn around a low performing charter school; directs the State Board of Education to: select independent school turnaround experts, through a request for proposals process; review and approve school turnaround plans submitted by a local school board or charter school governing board; and make rules imposing certain consequences on a school district or charter school that fails to improve the school grade of a low performing school within a certain amount of time; creates the School Recognition and Reward Program to provide incentives to schools and educators to improve the school grade of a low performing school; creates the School Leadership Development Program to increase the number of highly effective school leaders capable of initiating, achieving, and sustaining school improvement efforts; requires the State Board of Education to annually report to the Education Interim Committee; allows the State Board of Education to use certain non-lapsing funds, remaining at the end of fiscal year 2015, for certain purposes. (source: OLRGC) [end]

SB245
SCHOOL GRADING AMENDMENTS
(Millner/Last)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

SENATE: 26-1-2

HOUSE: 46-23-6

By virtue of the growth calculation included in the school grading formula, many excellent schools throughout Utah next year would experience stagnation or declining scores because of inherent numeric anomalies. This bill attempts to fix that problem by adjusting the growth component. It also exempts some schools from the grading system based as long as the school is adhering to its accountability plan. UCN supports rational, empirically based solutions to education achievement.

This bill amends provisions related to assigning a letter grade to a school based on the proficiency, learning gains, or college and career readiness of the school's students. (source: OLRGC)

This bill allows the State Board of Education to exempt certain schools from school grading; requires the State Board of Education to evaluate a school that is exempted from school grading in accordance with an accountability plan; amends provisions related to calculating student growth; requires the State Board of Education to make recommendations to the Education Interim Committee on calculating student growth; provides an alternative grade distribution for the 2014-15 school year only. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *

SB263
EARLY READING AMENDMENTS
(Urquhart/Last)

UCN Position: SUPPORT

SENATE: 29-0-0

HOUSE: 53-16-6

The ability to read well is critical for success in life. Early reading programs have been introduced and funded that have shown that early introduction to reading (even pre-K) have aided in the advanced placement of many students throughout their education careers. The State Board of Education should be the fiduciary of the licenses for this technology driven program.

This bill amends provisions related to early reading assessments and interventions in public schools. (source: OLRGC)

This bill amends provisions related to a diagnostic assessment system for early reading; requires the State Board of Education to distribute licenses for early reading software to a school district or charter school by a certain date; requires a public school that receives a license for early reading software to comply with certain standards; directs the State Board of Education to establish certain standards; provides for evaluation of the use of early reading software. (source: OLRGC)

* * * * *