SFY 2021 / SFY 2022 BUSINESS CASE/FUNDING REQUEST

Agency: UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Program Title: Utah School Leadership Initiative
Total Amount Requested: $ 5M ongoing

USBE Section(s): Administration, Teaching and Learning

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1. What system or program is the focus of this request?
Principals have a significant impact on student achievement. Studies have shown that after
teachers, principals have the second highest in-school effect on student learning. This makes
sense, given their role in supervising and supporting teachers, setting the tone for school
culture and climate and implementing instructional and curricular priorities. But as districts
and charter schools across Utah go to work on making significant improvements to
student experience and outcomes, many find that they lack the leadership capacity at the
school level to effectively implement and manage these efforts.

Districts and charter schools across the state struggle to recruit, develop, and
retain the high-quality principals that they need—and this deficit is often felt most keenly in
schools serving our students with the greatest need.
The Utah Education Interim Committee in 2017 created a task force to focus on the development of a Utah school leadership initiative. The Utah State Board of Education created the school leadership working group in December of 2017, led by Assistant Superintendent Darin Nielsen. The working group brought forth 14 recommendations to the Utah State Board of Education in December 2018, which were approved and have led to the development of this business case.

2. If this is an existing system or program what is the most recent fiscal year budget and operating expenses.

This is a new program request and does not have prior year funding.

a. Does the budget include one-time funding?
   This is a new program request and does not have prior year funding.

b. How many FTEs are currently funded within or by this existing system or program?
   This is a new program request and does not have prior year funding.

   i. What are the respective pay rates of each one of the FTEs?

   ii. Describe the duties and responsibilities of each FTE that supports and/or is funded by this system and/or program?
3. **What problem would be solved with additional funding?** (Show historical data to support problem statement). Or, is this an innovation? If so, provide initial data that will support the need or requirement for innovation.

The School Leadership request is an innovation. USBE is creating school leadership competencies through authentic experiences. The School Leadership Initiative builds upon recommendations from a statewide working group to create an ecosystem of strategies, resources, and policies to support learning and innovation for Utah's school leaders. The School Leadership Initiative is aligned with the agency's strategic plan for *Effective Educators and Leaders: Each student is taught by effective educators who are supported by effective school leaders*. The initiative is being led by Assistant Superintendent Darin Nielsen with cross agency expertise including ULEAD, Teaching and Learning, and Special Education.

The School Leadership working group was convened in 2017 and presented 14 recommendations to the Utah State Board of Education, which were approved in December 2018. Of these fourteen recommendations, the Utah State Board of Education has created a business case around the following three recommendations:

1. **Develop, adapt, or adopt school leader performance assessment that will allow candidates for the principalship to demonstrate their leadership knowledge and skills prior to receiving a credential/license.**

2. **USBE should seek funding to establish a school leadership development grant to assist LEAs in improving the principal pipeline, providing meaningful job embedded experiences to school leader candidates, providing 3 years of high quality mentorship for every new school leader, supporting principal supervisors and ensuring a continuous cycle of improvement for all school leaders.**

3. **To assist with development of a diverse and quality principal pipeline, USBE should seek funding to provide scholarships like the T.H. Bell scholarship program, that would provide scholarship relief to potential administrators. This program would assist in school leader recruitment and purposefully increase the number of principal candidates from underrepresented communities. In addition, such a scholarship provides promise of increasing the quality of the candidate’s experiences during the preparation program.**

The other 11 recommendations from the School Leadership working group do not require new fiscal resources and are being developed and implemented with available resources.

USBE staff has collected data on current school leadership FTEs, retention rates, rates of student achievement compared to licensure status, and retirement potential for the current field. Outcomes of data review are summarized below:
In June 2019, Utah CACTUS showed we have 1,981 Administrative FTEs in Utah K-12.

The state of Utah currently shows we have 3,347 active individuals with Administrative/Supervisory (K-12) credentials.

In most Utah LEAs, current school leaders lack access to robust professional learning and a network of colleagues to discuss problems of practice due to lack of resources.

Utah data demonstrates that we retain our school leaders at higher rates than the national average. Recognizing that individuals stay in these positions, having professional learning and supports embedded in the job is essential for continuous improvement.

Utah data demonstrates that student performance improves in schools that are led by school leaders with Administrative/Supervisory (K-12) credentials.

The availability of active individuals with Administrative/Supervisory (K-12) credentials in rural and charter schools is significantly lower when compared with districts on the Wasatch front. These communities would benefit from support for individuals to earn their administrative licensure to fill future leadership roles.

Legislative Solutions:

- Legislation and resources to establish a school leadership development grant to assist LEAs with School Leadership ($5M ongoing) including:
  - Improving the principal pipeline for rural and charter schools
  - Providing meaningful job embedded experiences to school leader candidates
  - Providing 3 years of high-quality mentorship for every new school leader
  - Supporting principal supervisors and ensuring a continuous cycle of improvement for all school leaders
4. What has been done to solve this problem with existing resources? What were the results?

LEAs have attempted to meet this challenge through multiple approaches:

1. Leveraging local funding initiatives to meet the needs for development of school leadership.

2. Seeking outside grant opportunities to supplement current efforts. For example, Granite School District has been awarded a grant through George W. Bush Institute's School Leadership Initiative. These awards are limited and provide resources for very few LEAs in Utah.

3. Utilizing sustainability measures through human resources policies related to retention of talent.

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These efforts have been marginally effective in meeting the needs that are being requested by the community, and are often limited to individual LEAs, which does not lead to systematic changes. This creates a larger disparity between access to resources, leading in inequity between LEAs and opportunities for school leadership.

The Utah State Board of Education has been taking steps to build a foundation for the school leadership initiative, which are detailed below:

- The USBE reviewed and approved board rule R277-305 for new School Leadership licensure policies and processes in June 2019.
- Agency staff have started the launch of the Principal Partnership Network, a collaborative community of practice that allows for professional learning and sharing of best practices.
- The USBE is working collaboratively with ULEAD on a research brief on school leadership research to inform both agency staff and our K-12 leaders as we develop solutions for this initiative. ULEAD has created two research briefs that are available on the website: https://www.schools.utah.gov/ulead/leadershipdevelopment
- The USBE is has gathered information related to the procurement of a performance assessment for school leadership. Staff have spoken with state leaders from Massachusetts on lessons learned from their performance assessment and are using those to inform the proposed solution development.
5. If this is a new funding request, what specifically, is being purchased with this requested investment? (USBE FTEs (include benefits and indirect), grants to LEAs, professional development, purchasing technology, systems, or other items).

- Creation of a School Leadership Development grant ($5M ongoing) to LEAs and regional service centers to assist LEAs with School Leadership including:
  - Improving the principal pipeline for rural and charter schools
  - Providing meaningful job embedded experiences to school leader candidates, such as in creating school climate as detailed in the visual below.
  - Providing 3 years of high-quality mentorship for every new school leader
  - Supporting principal supervisors and ensuring a continuous cycle of improvement for all school leaders

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• 1 USBE FTE – The creation of a school leadership specialist ($200K ongoing) to be able to
develop and execute the performance assessment, school leadership development
grant, and/or school leadership scholarship for the state of Utah.

6. Are other required support services (IT, systems, software) necessary to implement the
request?
All resources are identified in the request above.

7. What are the anticipated results or outcomes of how the new funding will be utilized?
What measure(s), including quality, throughput, and costs, will be used to track the change
over time? Is data currently available to support these measures? List the performance
measure(s) that will be used to track outcomes.

Anticipated results include:
• Improved student learning outcomes for LEAs being led by school leaders with
Administrative/Supervisory (K-12) credentials.
• Improved development of school leadership expertise to provide meaningful job
embedded experiences to school leader candidates, supporting principal supervisors,
and ensuring a continuous cycle of improvement for all school leaders.
• Increase in school leadership candidates from underrepresented groups

Data Measures include:
• Number of school leaders engaged in the principal partnership network.
• Number of school leaders engaged in meaningful job embedded experiences to build
expertise
• Retention of Utah School Leaders (disaggregated by subgroup).
• Number of individuals with Administrative/Supervisory (K-12) credentials
• Surveys to capture feedback from stakeholders on impact.
8. **What are the impacts if the funding is not received?**
Currently, great potential for development of effective school leaders is limited due to the lack of targeted resources. The current school leadership efforts at a local level vary in regard to access and intensity. The current efforts have left many of the smaller and often rural schools and charter schools reluctant or unable to provide coaching and professional learning for their school leaders due to cost. This increased funding to the LEAs levels the playing field and provides students who attend LEAs with the least amount of resources the same opportunity for transformational school leaders. As demonstrated by the recommendations of the School Leadership working group, this is a need that has the potential to change culture, climate, and outcomes for students across the state.

9. **Please summarize any legislation needed in conjunction with this incremental budget change request.**
USBE staff have completed the legislative request form in addition to the business case for school leadership.

Legislation would be required for the establishment of the School Leadership Grant, specific to grant management structure, data requirements, and guidance for creation of the USBE rule. Legislation would also be required for the establishment of the School Leadership Scholarship, specific to the eligibility, applicant selection, and obligations.

10. **To what extent is this request scalable? If a lower amount of funding is available, please articulate whether this would be effective and if so, what are the per-unit anticipated outcomes associated with lower funding increments?**

The request is scalable. We have articulated costs for each of the three requests, and it would be possible to fund one or two of the requests, recognizing that unfunded elements would not be implemented.

Additionally, if the funding for the School Leadership grant is less than the requested amount, it is possible that the funding model is shifted to be competitive to make sure resources are allocated in alignment with expectations for outcomes.