



# Utah Education Association

## CAPITOL BULLETIN

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[www.utea.org](http://www.utea.org)

"News from the Utah Legislature"

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### For Your Information

#### *Special educators to get some help if HB 67 passes*

The Utah Legislature continues to prioritize education funding bills, and one that would help the state's special educators is getting more attention.

Lawmakers are considering a \$2.9 million appropriation to fund House Bill 67, which would extend the school year by approximately three days for special education teachers who need time to perform duties related to the IEP process.

HB 67, sponsored by Representative Rhonda Menlove (*R-Garland*), is now listed as one of the Legislature's top ten public education funding priorities for 2008-09.

The original bill would have extended the school year up to ten days. Working the additional days is voluntary for special educators.

"Even though this bill has been pared down, it is still an acknowledgment of the paperwork burden carried by our special education teachers," said UEA Executive Director Susan Kuziak.



### The Week in Review

UEA President Kim Campbell is urging members to contact the governor and legislators TODAY and ask them to hold firm to their commitment to provide a \$2,500 salary adjustment and a 3 percent increase on the WPU. The state's tax policies may be hurting schoolchildren, according to a new report from Utahns for Public Schools. The Legislature is close to funding a bill to extend the school year for special educators.

House Phone: 538-1029 or 1-800-908-4261 Senate Phone: 538-1035 or 1-800-613-0677

### Call to Action: Teacher compensation proposal a disappointment

With less than a week to go before the end of the legislative session, Utah lawmakers are finalizing plans for a teacher compensation package that includes a \$1,700 across-the-board salary hike and a 2.5 percent increase in the Weighted Pupil Unit (WPU).

The governor and the Utah Legislature made it clear early on in the session that they wanted public education to be their number one priority. Governor Huntsman advocated for a minimum 7 percent increase on the WPU. Legislative leaders called for a \$2,500 teacher salary adjustment, plus at least 3 percent on the WPU. "The governor and Legislature set the bar high," said UEA Executive Director Susan Kuziak. "Even though revenue estimates are down, there is still substantial money available to meet the needs of our schools and address the public's education priorities. The latest proposal from lawmakers, which represents less than a 5 percent increase, is disappointing." Kuziak said legislators are funding new programs at the expense of a meaningful WPU increase.

On a positive note, the Legislature has listed \$10 million for teacher-directed supplies and materials as a top priority in the one-time money category.

**UEA President Kim Campbell today issued an urgent call to action to all UEA members.** "Please call every legislator and urge them to keep their commitment to increase the WPU by a minimum of 3 percent, provide \$2,500 in a teacher salary adjustment, and prioritize class size reduction," Campbell said. "Thank the governor and legislative leaders for acknowledging the public's demand for an investment in public schools, but let them know the proposed 2.5 percent WPU increase will leave almost every school district in the state struggling." Campbell said members need to send e-mails, write letters to the editor, and make multiple phone calls to each legislator.

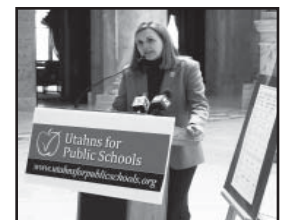
### Utah tax policies are hurting schoolchildren

A new report by Utahns for Public Schools (UTPS) reveals that overall revenue available for the state's public schools has declined during the past 12 years due to poor tax policy decisions.

At a press conference Wednesday afternoon, UTPS representatives pointed out that the establishment of a flat tax has reduced revenues for schools this year, and will significantly reduce the rate of growth in the Education Fund in future years.

The report also says steady cuts in the property tax over the past 12 years have cost Utah public schools \$381 million. That's money that could have been used to bring teacher salaries ahead of the national average, reduce class sizes in first- through third-grades by 12 students per class, and provide pre-school classes for all the low-income students in the state who are now covered by Head Start.

Equally disturbing is a new legislative proposal, Senate Bill 28, that would decrease corporate tax burdens for some of Utah's richest corporations. If passed, the measure will reduce corporate taxes for school funding by \$60 million per year by 2013.



UEA President Kim Campbell speaks during a UTPS press conference on taxes.

### Need Legislative Information?

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