

EDUCATION



THE UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Report to the Education Interim
Committee

Elementary Teacher Preparation Assessment Grant

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STATUTORY REQUIREMENT

U.C.A. Sections 53F-5-215

The state board shall annually report to the Education Interim Committee on or before the November interim committee meeting regarding the administration and outcomes of the grant described in this section.

Elementary Teacher Preparation Assessment Grant

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Candidates seeking licensure in early childhood, elementary, or special education, will be required to demonstrate their knowledge in the science of reading related to literacy instruction by passing the Utah Foundations of Reading Assessment (UFORA). This grant will cover the cost of the initial administration of the assessment. The first three years will be a pilot to gather data. In the spring of 2024, the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) established a cut score of 240 for the UFORA. Beginning September 1, 2024, candidates are required to pass the assessment at the established cut score of 240 to receive their teaching license. USBE will collect data on the number of candidates who complete and pass the assessment.

Background - Elementary teacher preparation assessment grant.

Beginning in the fall of 2021, the USBE began awarding grants to institutions of higher education for the cost of the initial attempt of the literacy preparation assessment for applicants graduating from universities during the relevant year. This literacy preparation assessment is a requirement for those seeking licensure in the following areas of concentration: early childhood, elementary, or special education. Institutions of higher education may apply for the grant by submitting an application to the State Board of Education, including an estimate of the number and the names of prospective license applicants. USBE issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking a qualified vendor to provide a teacher literacy preparation assessment to measure teacher candidate's foundational knowledge in the science of reading related to literacy instruction described in Utah Code Annotated § 53F-5-215. An RFP was run and Pearson's Foundations of Reading Assessment was chosen.

Participation - Elementary teacher preparation assessment grant.

During the 2024-2025 school year, all nine Utah universities were required to participate. All nine universities were required to ensure their graduates met a 75% passing threshold on the UFORA, as mandated.

Funding - Elementary teacher preparation assessment grant.

The maximum contract budget for this assessment is \$275,000.00 for year 1 and \$375,000.00 per year for years 2-5, for a maximum contract total of \$1,775,000.00. Funds will cover the initial administration of the assessment for teacher candidates in special education, early childhood, and elementary education licensure programs.

A voucher system was available beginning October 2021. Pearson currently provides a voucher model that will allow an individual to register for the test without paying the registration fee. Candidates will use vouchers as a form of full payment when registering for the assessment. Pearson works with the USBE to develop and monitor USBE voucher purchases and distribution. In the years 2024-2025, approximately 3,000 vouchers were used.

In Spring of 2024, after 3 years of data collection, USBE and a group of science of reading experts determined a passing score of 240 on the UFORA through a standards setting process. As of September 1, 2024, the state established cut score will be used to determine who is eligible to receive their license in the following license areas: early childhood, elementary, or special education.

Outcomes - Elementary teacher preparation assessment grant.

The 2024-2025 school year was the third full year of data collection with all universities participating. Data validation is currently underway to ensure accuracy and integrity.