

November 5, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Regents  
FROM: David L. Buhler  
SUBJECT: StepUP READY Grants

Background

In 2010, Governor Herbert designated the Board of Regents as the state agency responsible for applying for, receiving, and managing the College Access Challenge Grant Program (CACG) from the U.S. Department of Education. Over the past four years, the CACG has expanded and enhanced the statewide infrastructure dedicated to significantly increasing the number of low-income and underrepresented students who are prepared to enter and be successful in postsecondary education.

Since 2010, USHE has awarded almost \$2.3 million in CACG ImpACT (Improving Preparation, Access, and Communities Together) sub-grants to not-for-profit colleges and universities to partner with, establish, strengthen, or expand outreach and access programs geared towards supporting the 66% by 2020 goal.

As the CACG money sunsets this fiscal year (FY15), the Utah legislature appropriated \$1 million in ongoing funds during the 2014 session to the Commissioner's Office to support college readiness. The Commissioner designated a significant part of this appropriation for grants that build upon the administrative structure of the ImpACT sub-grants and sustain a number of college readiness initiatives created under the CACG. More specifically, the grants will support collaboration between public education and higher education to support college readiness in the schools.

Issue

We know that the most effective college readiness efforts come as a result of strong partnerships between higher education and public education. Collaboration between K-12 and higher education institutions continually demonstrate positive outcomes, but can be difficult to initiate and sustain.

In June, USHE released the RFP for the StepUP READY grants, inviting applications from partnerships between school districts/local education authorities (LEAs) and Utah not-for-profit higher education institutions in an effort to increase the number of Utah's public high school students who graduate college-ready and enroll in a post-secondary institution. \$600,000 in StepUP READY grants up to \$50,000 each were available to school districts/LEAs that partner with Utah not-for-profit higher education institutions. All

grants required a robust partnership between the LEAs and the not-for profit higher education institution to ensure effective and intentional efforts surrounding college preparation, enrollment, and first-year transition.

All grants also needed to be keyed to specific college readiness objectives provided by USHE in the grant. These objectives were divided into four categories: preparation, enrollment, transition, and professional development.

The RFP listed more than 20 objectives, including:

- Increase number of students who achieve ACT college-readiness benchmarks through targeted interventions and support.
- Increase number of students completing concurrent English 1010 and/or Math 1030/1040/1050 with a grade of "B" or higher.
- Increase the number of students taking STEM-related courses in senior year.
- Increase parental engagement related to college preparation and attainment.
- Increase number of first-generation high school seniors who apply to one or more colleges/universities.
- Engage under-represented students in intentional summer programming to ease transition (note: this refers to "bridge" programs, not orientation or first-year experience).
- Engage teachers and administrators in college readiness training.

Applications were due on September 8, 2014. Applicants then entered into a consultation period whereby applicants that met the minimum requirements of the RFP were asked to submit additional and clarifying information. A committee composed of representatives from public education and higher education then reviewed these applications.

Review committee:

- Dr. Martin Bates, Superintendent of Granite School District
- Dr. Shannon Dulaney, Superintendent of Iron County School District
- Dr. Nancy Singer, Interim Vice President, Salt Lake Community College
- Dr. Sandi Pershing, Assistant Vice President, University of Utah
- Melissa Miller Kincart and Spencer Jenkins, representatives of Commissioner of Higher Education

USHE received a total of 23 applications:

- All USHE institutions submitted at least one grant application.
- 2 charter schools submitted applications.
- Applications proposed programs that would provide interventions in 24 school districts.

The review committee recommended to the Commissioner that nine grants be awarded. These nine grants represent collaborations between six USHE institutions and 19 school districts. Please see attachment for list of grants approved by the Commissioner to enter into grant agreement with USHE.

Next steps:

- All grantees must enter into a grant agreement with USHE, spelling out any modifications in the application (such as expansion of programs or utilization of existing USHE programs), including data sharing, and exploring sustainability.
- With the submission of a completed grant agreement, funds will be expended in January 2015.

- Implementation of interventions should take place from January-December 2015.
- Reports will be due to USHE in June 2015, January 2016, and April 2016.

Commissioner's Recommendation

This is an information item, no action is required.

DLB/CF  
Attachment

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David L. Buhler  
Commissioner of Higher Education

- 1. Dixie State University & Washington County School District** **\$50,000**  
David Roos & Colin Metzger  
**Improving College Math Preparedness in Washington County**  
Increase college preparation in Washington County by increasing the number of sophomores enrolling in Secondary Math III; increasing the passing rates of Secondary Math III; and increasing the number of students taking a 4<sup>th</sup> year of high school math.
- 2. Snow College & K16 Alliance** **\$58,975**  
Steve Hood & Andrew Peterson  
**Opportunities to Prepare Now (OPeN)**  
Increasing college awareness and readiness in Juab, Millard, Piute, Sevier, North Sanpete, South Sanpete, Wayne School Districts by introducing Utah Scholars Initiative to those districts and building upon the 8<sup>th</sup> grade intervention. A parallel parent initiative in Spanish will reach additional families.
- 3. University of Utah & Canyons, Granite, Washington County, & Iron County School Districts** **\$74,360**  
Paul Gore  
**Advancing Utah's College Readiness Agenda Through Professional Development, Cultivating Partnerships**  
Increasing counselor professional development by expanding the Collaborative Counselor Training Initiative throughout these districts and building parent-student college readiness support workshops targeting at-risk and under-represented students.
- 4. University of Utah & Granite School District** **\$36,500**  
Sandi Pershing/Nicole Batt & Judy Peterson  
**Utah College Advising Corps Expansion**  
Improving college enrollment through by expanding existing College Advising Corps to place a member at Olympus High School, a school with an increasing number of under-served students.
- 5. Utah State University & Box Elder, Cache, Jordan, & Salt Lake School Districts** **\$75,000**  
Camille Odell & Nancy Karpowitz  
**USU School Counselor Professional Development Partnership**  
Increasing counselor professional development by expanding the Collaborative Counselor Training Initiative throughout these districts and implementing counselor created action plans at each impacted school.

**6. Utah State University Eastern & San Juan School District \$67,954**

Jared Berrett & Heather Young

**STEM Infusion & FAFSA StepUP Initiatives**

Improving college readiness by increasing the number of students taking four years of STEM-related courses (math and science) through targeted hands-on after-school activities and professional development for teachers. Will also deliver FAFSA completion workshops.

**7. Utah Valley University & Mountain View High School \$74,514**

Kyle Reyes & John Burton

**UVU/Mountain View HS Enroll Now Partnership (Alpine School District)**

Impacting the enrollment of under-served students by increasing the number of first-generation high school students who apply to one or more colleges/universities and increasing the number of seniors who complete the FAFSA.

**8. Weber State University & Syracuse High School \$49,885**

Scott Nielson & Sandy Rich

**Titan University (Davis School District)**

Improving college readiness by introducing ACT workshops to remediate students who scored below benchmarks on the junior-year ACT test. Increasing the number of students taking AP/CE courses in grades 11 & 12, and implementing FAFSA workshops to increase the number of seniors who complete the FAFSA.

**9. Weber State University & Weber School District \$20,252**

Beth Rhoades & Reid Newey

**College Knowledge in 10<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Increase college awareness and attainment by providing professional development for 10<sup>th</sup> grade teachers to improve their knowledge of the college-going process and increasing the number of students taking concurrent enrollment.