

USDB Legislative Workgroup
Proposed Activities and Timeline
DRAFT 11-13-07

Background

The Utah State Office of Education (USOE) began in August 2007 to work with a group of stakeholders to consider how current state statute might be amended to better reflect current state and federal requirements and to more clearly define the role of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (USDB). The USDB Legislative Workgroup has reached a point in its work that several key steps need to be taken in order for the work of the group to continue to be well-informed and supported by the citizens USDB serves, USDB staff, local school districts, and the Utah State Board of Education (USBE). Some of the key next steps include:

- ? Research needs to be conducted to determine how other states are approaching the same challenges that Utah is facing.
- ? The USDB Institutional Council needs to complete its study and share its findings concerning governance of USDB.
- ? Based on research gathered and the needs of Utah, specific proposals need to be drafted that would amend statutory language.
- ? The Finance Subcommittee of the USDB Legislative Workgroup will need to determine the potential costs of any proposals that significantly change the structure, eligibility, and services of USDB.
- ? Public meetings will need to be conducted to provide opportunities for community input into the proposed legislative draft.
- ? Presentations to the USBE of both the draft proposal and the potential financial impact need to be made so that any requests for new funding can be included in its prioritization of legislative requests.
- ? The Utah State Office of Education will need to work with analysts from both the Utah State Legislature and Governor's Office in drafting proposed legislation and any fiscal notes that would accompany proposed legislation.
- ? Members of both the Utah Senate and House of Representatives will need to be identified who will sponsor legislation.

Recommendations

Any changes to Utah state code regarding the purpose, role, structure, financing, and authority of USDB will have a significant impact on the educational opportunities of students who are deaf, blind, or deafblind (and their families) in Utah. Although the Utah State Office of Education feels that statutory changes are needed, it recommends:

1. The USBE and members of the Utah State Legislature work with the USDB Legislative Workgroup and the community to draft proposed legislation to be considered in the 2009 legislation session.
2. Implement the attached activity timeline to allow the in-depth consideration of key issues. The proposed timeline will enable proposals to be drafted that include quantifiable funding projections that can be included in funding prioritization processes for both the USBE and the Utah State Legislature.
3. Leadership at USOE and USDB should work with USBE and State Legislators to address specific concerns regarding current services provided by USDB.