The 2020 legislative session is quickly approaching and begins Monday, January 27, 2020, ending Thursday, March 12, 2020. Each year, USEA alters and finalizes its legislative priorities. These priorities reflect USEA’s core legislative interests concerning Education Support Professionals (ESP’s), public education funding, Student Transportation, and the wellbeing of our Utah students.

This legislative session will have a different vibe compared to past sessions as there will likely be more emphasis on changing how public education is funded. The Utah legislature passed a comprehensive tax reform bill during a special session on December 12, 2019. This will impact public education as it strips away the stipulation that the 10% of total gross liquor sales revenue be appropriated to help fund school lunch programs. The next step in comprehensive tax reform is to change how public education is funded by altering the constitutional guarantee. Article 13 section 5 line 5 of the Utah Constitution states that intangible property tax and income tax will support the systems of public education and higher education. Changing this constitutional guarantee would allow the Utah Legislature more flexibility with how the income tax is spent.

This alteration can only happen by both houses of the legislature passing these proposed changes by a two-thirds vote. These constitutional amendments would then be voted on by Utah voters at the next general election. It is USEA’s position that we are not against any alterations to this constitutional guarantee clause if there is new language stipulating a new type of guaranteed education funding.

Besides this possible legislative action to alter the Utah Constitution, USEA will be monitoring any pieces of legislation that affect ESP’s and public education. Our 2020 legislative priorities are below. Be on the lookout for our action alerts and legislation tracking sheet. All members are invited to Educator Day on the Hill every Friday morning at 7 am in the Copper Room during the legislative session. Wear red to show support for public education every Friday during the session! This is a great opportunity to be briefed on the latest legislation, view both chambers of the legislation in action, and speak with your representatives. You can send me an e-mail or call our office with any questions or concerns.

Jeremiah Sniffen
Organizational Specialist
Government Relations Director
jsniffen@useautah.org
801-269-9120


The Utah School Employees Association (USEA) represents Education Support Professionals throughout Utah such as Clerical Services, Custodial and Maintenance Services, Food Services, Health and Student Services, Paraeducators, Security Services, Skilled Trades, Technical Services, Transportation Services. These men and women are essential elements of Utah’s quality educational system and fundamental partners in student success. USEA is the voice for Education Support Professionals throughout Utah.

PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDING
Support full funding of all costs associated with new student growth for the coming school year.
Support increased funding through the Weighted Pupil Unit to allow local school boards maximum flexibility in funding local priorities and needs, including employee compensation and retention.
Support not altering the Utah state constitutional guarantees that ensure public education funding through the state income tax.
Oppose education funding allocation based on artificial benchmarks such as dollars spent “in the classroom”.
Oppose the use of tax dollars to fund or subsidize non-public education.

LIVING WAGE COMPENSATION
Support legislation that encourages the creation and preservation of classified jobs with salary, hours, and benefits adequate to allow classified employees to raise families and build careers.
Oppose legislation that encourages local school boards to create part-time, non-benefitted classified jobs.

PRIVATIZATION AND LOCAL CONTROL
Oppose legislation that encourages or prefers the use of private contractors to provide support functions, which experience has shown is not in the best interest of Utah students or taxpayers.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION
Support full funding of state-law-mandated student transportation.
Support funding assistance for districts affected by increasing fuel costs or geographic challenges.
Support funding for local school boards to upgrade existing bus fleets for increased efficiency.
Oppose any privatization of school district’s bus fleets, maintenance operations, or route coordinators.

CHILD NUTRITION
Support continued child nutrition program funding from state liquor proceeds that guarantee students’ access to meals.

EMPLOYMENT
Support protection of adequate due process and evaluations for career classified employees, including continued protection from termination without just cause.
YOU DESERVE MORE
Including a change of scenery

You deserve to go places where even the photobombs are breathtaking. Find a world of travel savings, advice and more at NEA Member Benefits. Use your membership to plan an unforgettable, budget-friendly getaway.

Plan your picture-perfect trip at neamb.com/travel
WE’VE GOT YOUR BACK!

When you hear “We’ve got your back,” what does it mean to you? Is it so cliché in our society that it doesn’t mean much? Or does it mean you’ve got someone in your corner, cheering you on, rooting for you, lending a helping hand, supporting you through the complexities of our careers, districts, and the policies and laws in which we must operate? We help you to navigate the possible pitfalls, We’ve Got Your Back!!

For a moment, let’s talk about policies. Now don’t roll your eyes or go to sleep just yet! Many, many times I’ve fallen asleep reading a lengthy policy or law. Policies are our “Rules of Engagement” in our districts. Just like the laws of nature are a defense for not following policy. If you violate a policy, or law, We’ve Got Your Back? No. No we can only make sure you get your due process. We have no magic that changes rules. But...

You’ve got someone in your corner when it comes to something like advocate for your students, and then all that data gets compiled into our districts. USEA also supports us in our careers, we push back against it. The most costly, but we see it through, Why? Because We’ve Got Your Back!!

Each year, we have negotiations, some groan at the thought of this, but I KNOW ESP’s need us!  I have seen injustices in my association just a couple of years ago, and now, totally support our students.  Membership is the way to effect our growth. Membership is how we get involved.  Membership is the way to effect change in our districts. Membership is how we can change the legislature. Membership is how we support one another! Membership is how we gain more opportunities for personal growth and for local growth. Our only limit to our growth is in our own minds! I don’t know what we, as ESP’s, can do, but I KNOW Esp’s need us! We have seen injustices in our schools, I have advocated for members, I have helped members learn more about their rights, how to use their voice, and how to be involved. There are many obstacles to overcome, but they start with a simple conversation. This is sometimes scary to talk to people you don’t know, but how will you get to know them if you don’t? FEAR has two meanings...Forget Everything And Run OR Face Everything And RISE!!! The choice is yours. I choose to Rise. Rise in support, rise in knowledge, rise in advocacy, rise in service!! Rise and share this membership opportunity with everyone. Stay positive. Work Hard, and make it happen! Don’t be afraid to fail. Be afraid not to try!! I challenge each of us to go and get one, just one new member. With 51 delegates here today, we could have 102 members in a few weeks. Remember to offer potential members the opportunity to join, to be a part of something bigger than ourselves. To be supported, to be cared for, to be part of the solution. I am committed to this organization. I am committed to you!! I will commit myself to personally inviting 10 more ESP’s to join us before the end of the month. We are stronger together!!

Thank you for being committed to elevating our careers. Thank you for entrusting me to serve you. It is truly my pleasure!!

Lorica Pilivi
USEA Vice President
Why I Joined USEA
I joined USEA and my local Salt Lake City Buildings and Grounds Employee Association 10 years ago when I was working as the night custodial supervisor at East High School in the Salt Lake City School District. I was enrolled by the current head custodian Marcos Orozco. I have known about the association for years, but Marcos was the first one to really explain the benefits of membership to me. My reason for joining then was for the protection/representation they offered, to add my voice, and to have a vote for the ratification of negotiated agreements.

My reasons change as I grow and become more involved with my local, USEA, and the NEA. For the first few years of my membership I only attended the meetings and some social events. In the meetings I often sat towards the back, and had to have other members explain what’s happening, as I was often lost on some of the terminology. Eventually I understood and started to contribute my input. Members started asking for my input on issues. I moved up towards the front in the meetings and local leadership started to notice.

There were three people who encouraged my increased involvement and to consider a nomination for the local executive board. One of them was former executive board member Ted Condle, whose motto was “I do it for my dues paying constituents”. Ted was vital in teaching me the importance of understanding policies and contract language. He also taught me the importance of advocacy. Former local president Ricky Martinez taught me the importance of leadership. Current local president David Miller taught me the importance of being involved politically. My reasons then became more service oriented.

In 2017, I was nominated to the local executive board. Since July 2018, I have been serving my local as Vice President and since March 2019, I have been serving on the USEA Executive Board. So many great things have happened, are happening, and will happen because we’re all working together. It is exciting to see my local, state, and national associations grow. My reasons now are all the above plus more. Now it’s more like reasons I serve. I love doing site visits and having one on one conversations with members and potential members (Chaylee Olson really got me motivated for that, thanks Chay!!). I love the feeling when we increase membership and get “wins”. In closing I’d like to share with you my WHY: “To serve, protect, and advance the common goal. To lead by example and advocate for all”.

And finally, thank you all so much for your membership and for adding your voice.

In solidarity,
Erik Adams,
USEA Executive Board

MY NEA ESP CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITY

I was able to attend the NEA ESP Conference last spring. I appreciate the opportunity I had to go for many reasons. Most importantly, I was able to meet and go to workshops with others in our own state. I gained insight in how other locals were working and how other job families function. I learned a lot about how to do things better in my own local. I felt encouraged and motivated. I met amazing people. It gave me an opportunity to see the full scope of ESPs nationwide. I loved seeing and meeting with others and feeling that solidarity. I made new friendships from New York, to Oregon, New Jersey and North Dakota.

I gained valuable training and loved it all.
Lisa Adams
USEA Executive Board