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World-class education takes world-class teachers — and they need the right compensation

*Governor's Education Excellence Commission adopts recommendations
for higher, more effective teacher pay*

SALT LAKE CITY — A new analysis concludes that better teacher pay, on-the-job support, scholarships and other strategies are needed to recruit more Utah teachers, reduce teacher turnover and improve student outcomes in Utah. The analysis — led by Envision Utah and conducted by a task force of education, business and state leaders — was presented to the Governor's Education Excellence Commission this morning, and aspects of the report were adopted into the commission's proposed budget recommendations.

"If we want to be the strongest economy in the nation, we need to give our kids the best education possible — and Utah's teachers are key to providing that kind of world-class education," Governor Gary Herbert said regarding the report. "Teachers are deserving of our best efforts. In an already competitive job market, it's critical that we know what it takes both to recruit and to retain exceptional teachers."

The report recommends a substantial salary increase for all teachers — enough that starting annual compensation would begin around \$60,000 and grow to around \$110,000 over the course of a teacher's career. In addition, the report recommends that teachers experience stronger induction, have the opportunity to work more for more pay and have more opportunities for scholarships during their training. These steps, according to the report, would help stabilize the teaching profession in light of Utah's teacher shortage — reducing turnover and attracting more people into the profession. Beyond stabilization, the report also recommends stronger career pathways, greater family engagement, effective class sizes, and more support professionals as strategies to optimize instruction.

“It has been clear from the very first conversations with our task force that this is not just about teacher pay or even the teacher shortage. It’s about our children and grandchildren” Robert Grow, CEO of Envision Utah, said. “We talked about what it would take for the next generation to have the knowledge and skills they need to thrive – not just in their own communities, but in a global economy. Until now, no one has ever done the hard work to authoritatively say ‘this is what teacher compensation needs to look like in Utah’s competitive employment market to get the teachers we need and the results the future demands.’ That’s what we set out to do.”

Envision Utah’s teacher compensation task force has been meeting regularly since spring to create this report, with preparations beginning long before then. Members of the group studied Utah’s teacher shortage, data on compensation, and a host of other information. Before deciding on the final recommendations, they created and examined several scenarios representing different changes to teacher compensation and other factors along with the projected costs and outcomes.

The full report, “A Vision for Teacher Excellence,” can be found at envisionutah.org.

Envision Utah is a nonprofit that brings Utahns together to address Utah’s biggest challenges including education, air quality, transportation, water resources, disaster resilience, and more. Utah is growing fast, but it’s how we grow that matters. We believe that when Utahns come together, learn together, and understand real choices and outcomes, we can ensure Utah remains healthy, beautiful, prosperous, and neighborly for future generations.

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