

## Stronger Connections Grant – High Need Definition

The Utah State Board of Education's Strategic Plan prioritizes that each student learns in a safe and healthy school environment. Through the Stronger Connections Grant Program, funding is available to Local Education Agencies (LEA) experiencing high needs. The purpose of the funding is to improve student health and safety through measurable outcomes.

Utah defines high need as an LEA experiencing of two or more of the following factors:

- high student-to-mental health professional ratio;
- evidence of student suicidal behavior;
- bullying and harassment.
- community and school violence;
- students experiencing trauma;
- youth in care;
- human trafficking;
- substance abuse;
- English Learners;
- immigrant and refugee students;
- high rate<sup>1</sup> of poverty;
- students experiencing housing instability and homelessness;
- students experiencing food insecurity;
- students with chronic illness;
- students experiencing health disparities;
- high rate of chronic absenteeism;
- exclusionary discipline;
- referrals to alternative education placements;
- impacted by a natural disaster or traumatic event;
- other categories mentioned in Section 4108 20 U.S.C. 7118] Activities to Support Safe and Healthy Students

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<sup>1</sup> rate that is higher than the statewide average and has not decreased by at least 1% on average over the previous three school years