



NEWS RELEASE

Utah State Board of Education

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State Board of Education, DonorsChoose Launch \$12 Million Effort for Educators *Largest COVID Relief Funding Program of Its Kind to Directly Help Utah Public School Classrooms*

SALT LAKE CITY – Today, the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) officially launches the allocation of \$12 million in COVID-19 relief funds to directly help K-12 public school educators get classroom resources for the school year through [DonorsChoose](https://www.donorschoose.org/), a nonprofit crowdfunding website. The collaboration between USBE and DonorsChoose is the largest of its kind to date in the nation and will provide Utah educators with up to \$1,000 in funding for their projects, empowering them to support their students' success with classroom resources.

"Our educators have demonstrated incredible passion and innovation as they have gone above and beyond to help students during these unprecedented times caused by the pandemic," said Mark Huntsman, USBE Board Chair. "With the support of the Board and its staff, we are thrilled to have this opportunity to show appreciation for our educators by investing in their classrooms and providing them with the resources they need in this moment to address the impacts of disrupted learning."

The use of the funds for a classroom grant partnership was the idea of Board Member Molly Hart, who felt strongly that USBE get as much money as possible into the hands of the state's best educational resource, its teachers. "Utah's educators are some of the finest in the country and I was so inspired to witness firsthand how they continued to sacrifice and show up for their students throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. They not only helped their students, but helped their students' families, and school communities in incredibly innovative ways," said Hart. "In this moment more than ever, they deserve our support and appreciation, and I am proud that we as the Board are able to provide Utah's educators with resources to fund what their classrooms need most right now."

As part of the partnership with USBE, DonorsChoose will ensure any requests for instructional materials align with the Utah Core Standards. For any requests for non-instructional items, DonorsChoose will confirm that projects relate to one of the four main goal areas identified in USBE's strategic plan: safe and healthy schools; early learning; personalized learning; and effective teachers and leaders.

“We’re so grateful to collaborate with the Utah State Board of Education in such an innovative way to empower its educators and students during a critical time,” said Charles Best, founder of DonorsChoose. “These grants are an investment in the frontline wisdom of Utah’s educators that we know will help students across the State continue to go strong this school year and beyond.”

Any Utah full-time equivalent K-12 public school employee who spends the majority of their time directly educating or counseling students is eligible to create a project. Eligible projects are anticipated to be funded within one week of posting. Projects will be funded up to \$1,000 in total costs for student-focused resources.

“Our Utah teachers are the frontline experts who know what our students need in response to the pandemic,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction, Sydnee Dickson. “This innovative partnership with DonorsChoose allows for student-centered funding that is directed by the educators in the classroom to support learning and achievement. With this \$12 million allocation, we are thrilled to be able to get resources directly and immediately to our Utah educators and students.”

Since Charles Best founded DonorsChoose in 2000, more than 12,600 Utah teachers representing every school district have raised \$21 million for projects that help them go above and beyond in the classroom. The new collaboration between USBE and DonorsChoose will further this support for educators across the entire State.

USBE will begin funding eligible requests on a first-come, first-served basis beginning January, 18, 2021 and for as long as funding is available. Educators can learn how to create an eligible DonorsChoose project in the organization’s [Help Center](#).

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