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# Emergency Update: Proposed Changes Could Harm Deaf & Blind Students — Immediate Action Needed



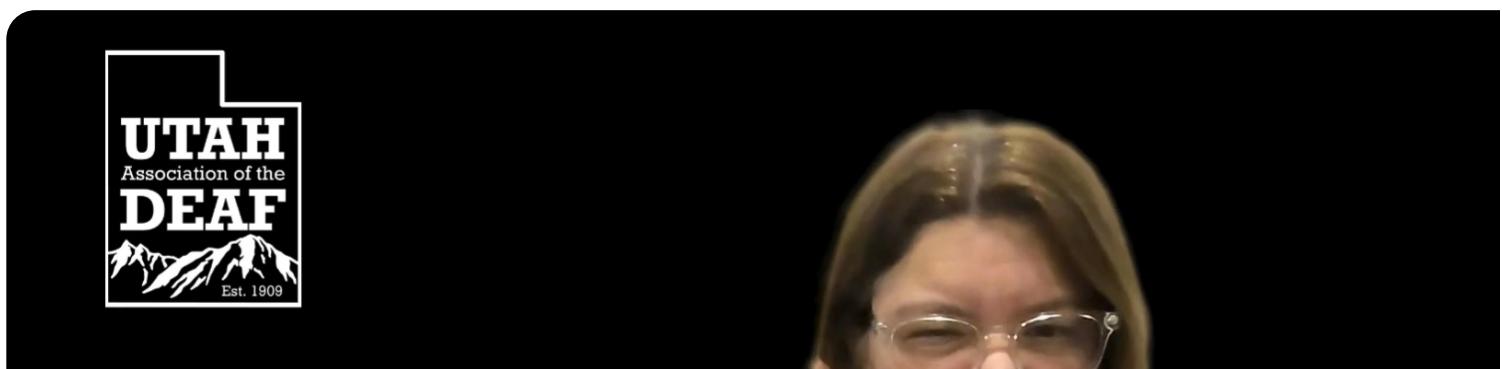
UTAH ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF

NOV 17, 2025

Hello everyone,

This message is extremely important for our Utah Deaf community...

WATCH the video: Emergency Update on USDB Proposals



This message is extremely important for our Utah Deaf community. Please take a moment to read and share.

The **UAD Education Committee** needs your immediate attention and support.

## **Emergency: Executive Appropriations Committee Meeting**

 **Tuesday, November 18**

 **2:00 PM**

 **Utah State Capitol**

This meeting will discuss major changes to the **Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind (USDB)**.

A new report, titled “**Intent Language Report on the USDB**,” includes proposed changes that could seriously harm Deaf and Blind students across Utah.

## **Four Major Concerns**

### **1 Blocking 504 Students from USDB Services**

The proposal says USDB will **no longer serve Deaf or Blind students** on pushing them back to local school districts.

Most districts **do not have specialized staff** or resources to support these students. This will lead to major gaps in services.

## 2 USDB as a "Last Resort"

The proposal limits USDB access, turning it into a last-resort option.

This means:

- Delays in early intervention
- Reduced access to experts
- Lower-quality education
- Students falling behind

## 3 Elimination of the USDB High School Program

This includes **funding cuts** and removal of the high school program.

This is a huge step backward.

Deaf and Blind students—already underserved—would lose a safe, accessible educational environment.

## 4 Staff Layoffs, Including Deaf Staff

These budget and structural changes could trigger **major job losses**, including employees.

This impacts:

- Students
- Families
- Teachers and specialists
- The future of our community

## Additional Concerns

USDB leadership **did not learn** about this meeting until **Friday night, November 10**.

We thank **Sara Williams from the Disability Law Center** for notifying us. She said that many in the community might still not know.

## What You Can Do

### 1 Get involved — your voice matters.

This is OUR community. We must ask:

**Why did Interim Superintendent Dr. Molly Hart exclude the Deaf and Associate Superintendents from state-level decision-making?**

They were not informed about the meeting or proposals.

No Deaf or Blind education experts were included.

## 2 Protect the current USDB service model.

The model:

- Supports Deaf, hard of hearing, and Blind students
- Provides communication choices
- Ensures statewide consistency
- Prevents students from being lost in mainstream systems

This model **works**. It must stay.

## 3 Fully fund the Deaf Enrichment Program.

This program provides:

- Language development
- Social opportunities
- Sports
- After-school programs

Deaf students deserve the same opportunities as every other child.

## 4 Remember the bigger picture.

In 2000, special education attorney **Lawrence M. Siegel** called state schools Deaf a “**treasure resource**” and urged states to protect them.

## Weakening USDB:

- Harms inclusion
- Limits progress
- Reduces accessibility

We must protect these systems for future generations.

## 📣 Call to Action

Please attend the **Executive Appropriations Committee meeting**:

 **Tuesday, November 18**

 **2:00 PM**

 **Utah State Capitol**

Your presence matters.

Your voice matters.

Our students' futures depend on us.

If you cannot attend, please **share this Substack post** widely.



10 Likes • 6 Restacks

## Discussion about this post

**Comments** Restacks



Write a comment...



**Sarah** 18h *Edited*

This information is misleading.

A student who is attending a USDB campus would have a IEP, not only a 504.



LIKE



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4 replies

4 more comments...