



The cost of re-educating public school students continues to increase.

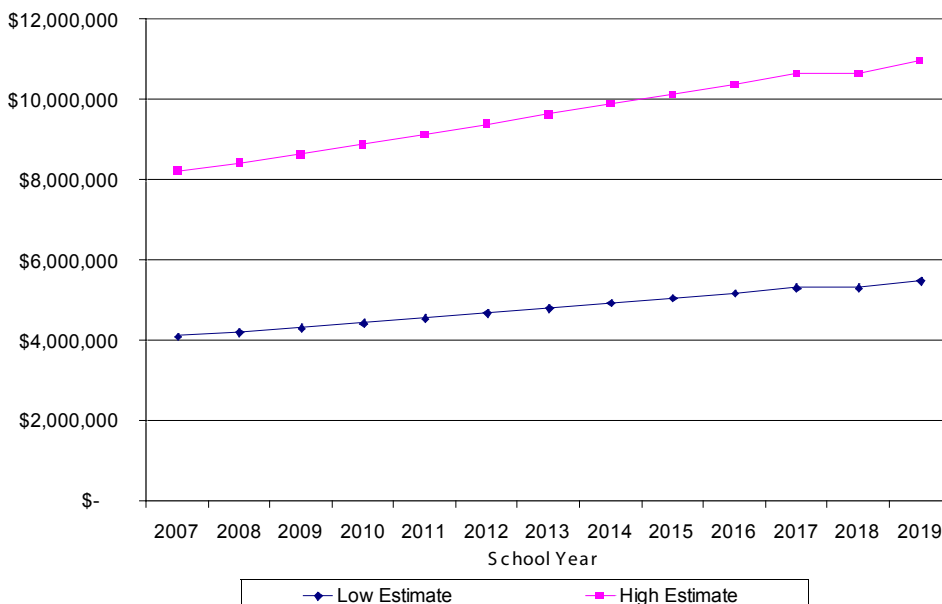
FACT: REMEDIATION COSTS UTAH TAXPAYERS AND BUSINESSES NEARLY \$30 MILLION A YEAR

Using the term “remediation” is the polite way of expressing the need to re-educate Utah high school graduates. Remedial classes, also known as “developmental education,” are common throughout the United States and in Utah. While remediation does not imply inability or a lack of intelligence for any such student, it does mean that many students did not or were not able to learn basic literacy and/or math during their elementary and secondary school years.

For instance, based on the most recently available data from the Utah State Office of Education, about eight percent

(8%) of Utah’s public school students did not achieve proficiency in math, five percent (5%) did not achieve proficiency in writing, and two percent (2%) did not achieve proficiency in reading before their graduation. Before these students can progress productively in employment or in higher education, they will need remediation classes to bring them up to expected levels of performance. While these proportions may seem small, the costs they generate are not. Based on enrollment data gathered from nine of ten schools in Utah’s System of Higher Education, the Sutherland Institute estimates that taxpayers spent between \$30 million and \$60 million on remedial education in the 2006 and 2007 school years alone.

Remediation Costs 2007-2019



There is no precise method to calculate the total socio-economic costs of remedial education for students that do not achieve proficiency in high school. One way to assess the approximate cost of remedial education is to estimate the taxpayers’ portion of remedial education costs at Utah’s public institutions of higher education. After analyzing data from Utah’s publicly-funded colleges and universities, the Sutherland Institute estimates that the taxpayers’ share of direct remedial education costs for 2006-2007 is between \$6.7 million and \$13.6 million (in 2006 dollars), depending on how many remedial courses are required to reach proficiency. If the

same proportions of students do not pass proficiency tests over the next thirteen years, taxpayers will pay between \$62 million and \$125 million in additional remediation costs.

These estimates, however, do not represent the full cost to society for remedial education. Time spent in remedial education equals time not spent earning money in the Utah economy. In other words, how much work time would be lost while these students

are in remediation classes? Referencing data on time spent in class from public colleges and universities to estimate the time requirement of remedial education, Sutherland estimates an additional cost from lost wages of \$5.4 million to \$17.6 million, depending on whether or not the student graduated from high school. Combining these estimated losses with the direct costs of remediation classes could dramatically increase the costs of remediation to over \$30 million in just one year.