Washington County School District
121 West Tabernacle Street
Saint George, Utah 84770
435-673-3553

Administrative Letter A170

Medicare Bridge Program

Medicare Bridge Program Approved by the Board of Education 03/18/2024; Updated 9/8/2025

DATE: March 18, 2024 (Updated 9/8/2025; Updated 2/9/2026)

FROM: Darin Thomas, Executive Director Human Resources

REGARDING: Early Retirement Benefit Payment for Bridge to Medicare Eligibility

Medicare Bridge Program for Qualified Employees

The District will provide an early retirement benefit payment to qualified employees to cover partial costs of insurance, until the employee is eligible for Medicare benefits. The benefit payment will be proportional to the length of time before the retiree is eligible for another insurance source.

Purpose

The Washington County School District is providing an early retirement benefit payment to employees who apply and meet the terms of eligibility. Participation in the Medicare Bridge Program (MBP) is voluntary and is available to employees who qualify based on the eligibility requirements set forth below. If an MBP is offered, it is the responsibility of each employee to carefully evaluate his/her personal economic situation with respect to their own financial situation prior to applying for the MBP.

Terms of Employee Eligibility

To qualify for the MBP, the employee must have been continuously employed by the District for a minimum of ten (10) consecutive full contract years just prior to retirement under contracts that were eligible for enrollment and membership in the Utah Retirement System according to the Utah Retirement Systems' rules and regulations.

Uninterrupted/continuous employment means employment without a separation from District employment of any kind. An authorized leave of absence, sabbatical leave, FMLA leave, or an employee who worked a full contract year, was terminated at the end of the contract year, and was subsequently rehired within 90 calendar days of the start of the following contract year is not considered to have a separation of

district employment.

FTE means Full Time Equivalent employee. The maximum FTE calculation for the purposes of this policy is one (1). To be credited with one FTE a classified employee must have been employed in a position that required at least 40 hours of work per week for a minimum of 179 days or more and a Certified employee must have been contracted to work for the entire school year on a "full time" basis. An administrative employee must have been contracted to work for the entire contract year on a “full time” basis. The fraction of a part-time contract will determine the appropriate fraction of an FTE.

The employee must apply and be approved for retirement from Utah Retirement Systems (URS).

Employees who are Medicare eligible as of the URS retirement effective date are not eligible for the MBP Program.

MBP will not be paid unless the eligible employee separates at the end of the contract year.

The lump sum benefit payment will be paid to a Health Retirement Account in the employee’s name. In no case will the employee be eligible for a "Cash" payment.

Application and Notice Requirements

The online application must be received by 4:00 pm on January 31st of each year.

The applications of those candidates that qualify for the program will be forwarded to the WCSD School Board for appropriate action at a regularly scheduled School Board meeting.

The benefit payment identified in Table 1 will be adjusted by the employee's average FTE over the last 10 years of service. For example, an eligible employee who worked half-time during the last 10 years will have an average FTE of .5. That employee will therefore receive half of the amount in the applicable row in the table below as the final benefit payment.

Table 1

URS Service Credit Years *(as of the URS retirement effective date)	Years to Medicare Eligibility *(as of the URS retirement effective date)	Maximum Lump Sum Be Payment to a Health Retirement Account
Minimum 30 years	**Greater than 5**	**$37,500**
Minimum 20 years	**Maximum of 5 but greater than 4**	**$37,500**
Minimum 20 years	**Maximum of 4 but greater than 3**	**$27,500**
Minimum 20 years	**Maximum of 3 but greater than 2**	**$17,500**
Minimum 20 years	**Maximum of 2 but greater than 1**	**$10,000**

Minimum 20 years	**Within 1 year**	**$5,000**

***The applicant will be required to provide documentation from URS, verifying the official retirement effective date in order to finalize the maximum lump sum benefit payment.**

Re-employment after separation

An employee who retires from the Washington County School District and receives the MBP benefit payment may not be re-employed by the District in a benefit eligible position until after they are eligible to participate in Medicare benefits.