
UTAH EDUCATOR SERVICES SUITE

Government to Government

State of Utah

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Utah State Office of Education (USOE) Educator Services Suite (ESS) allows Utah teachers to perform a number of tasks associated with license renewal entirely online. Through the system, a Utah educator can renew his or her Utah Educator License, register or renew a background check, apply for a student teacher license, and pay for a university recommendation.

Prior to the launch of this system in January 2007, the entire process of renewing a license took weeks. Now, teachers can complete the entire renewal process, including recommendations and background check, instantly online and print their renewed certificate directly from their computer rather than waiting weeks for a paper copy to be mailed to them. And teachers can pay for all of the services online through secure payment processing.

Educator License renewal, and the related suite of services, dramatically reduces the time and paper work required for license renewal, saving local and State government time and money. It also streamlines the process of State government working with the federal government when completing an educator background check.

Teachers and school have expressed satisfaction with the ease and accessibility of the system, and local and government is pleased with the efficiency of the applications. The savings to the State are obvious.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BUSINESS PROBLEM

The Utah State Office of Education launched the Educator Services Suite in January 2007. Prior to its launch it was an entirely paper process. A license renewal had to be mailed to the office, where it was submitted and checked manually, and then the renewal information was entered manually. After it was processed, a paper certificate was mailed to the educator. This process was burdensome for both the educator submitting the application and USOE employees who processed the renewals.

The original concept was to make license renewal available online; however, it quickly became apparent that it would streamline the process even further if educators were able to complete background checks online as well as recommendations.

Solution Description

There are now four services available through ESS. When designing and developing ESS, the goal was to create a simple, functional, application that could be easily integrated into an institutions' existing systems.

Background Checks: Utah Law (53A-1a-512.5) requires that each applicant for a Utah Educator License must satisfactorily complete a background check. A background check is also required of applicants desiring to renew a Utah Educator License that has expired. To complete the background check, an applicant must submit fingerprints for review by the Utah Bureau of Criminal Investigation and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The procedure for the required background check includes fingerprinting. The filer must choose between a LiveScan electronic fingerprint submission or a card fingerprint submission.

Finally, the filer must pay for background check processing. After payment of fees, the filer is able to print his or her forms as well as save an electronic file of these forms on a personal computer.

License Renewal: This online license renewal system is available to current Level 2 and Level 3 Utah Professional Educator License holders. Educators fill out a few simple fields and the information is automatically checked against the USOE database to ensure that he or she can continue with the renewal. The information is then gathered and the educator can pay for the license renewal online. After the payment is processed instantaneously, he or she is able to print a license document as well as save an electronic file of this document on a personal computer.

Student Licenses: As part of a university teacher preparation program, a student teacher is required to complete a student teaching program, which requires a Student License. A university or teaching institution may issue a Student Teacher or Intern Certificate to ensure a background procedure has been completed for student safety, as well as supporting agreements between the issuing institution and the district of placement.

To complete student licensing, a student completes the online form, pays the fees online, and, as with the license renewal, is able to print a copy of his or her license, as well as save an electronic copy.

University Recommendations: This process is for those whose Utah university or college has recommended them for a teaching license after having completed a teacher preparation program in Utah.

In June an addition to the suite of services will be launched. Teachers will not only be able to renew their current license, but they will also be able to upgrade their license. As educators must be certified for the specific level they teach (1, 2, etc.) they will be able to upgrade to different levels online.

Length of Time in Operation

The solution has been in place since January 2007 (17 months).

SIGNIFICANCE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE OPERATION OF GOVERNMENT

As mentioned above, the paper process was burdensome for all parties involved: local government, State government, and the universities. To complicate matters further, the federal government was also involved in the background checks. With each level of government required for a different function, it was a lengthy process. With the advent of ESS, all levels of government can work together via the online suite of services. In addition, it is estimated that the process takes only five to six minutes per renewal.

There are approximately 22,000 educators in Utah, and because USOE no longer completes manual data entry and checking for the majority of these educators, the system saves USOE one full-time employee. What used to take an employee several minutes to complete manually is now checked against the database instantly online.

Also, the system saves teachers, and in return school districts, time and money. In the first year there was over a 90 percent adoption rate.

BENEFIT OF THE PROJECT

As evidenced by the high adoption rate, teachers are thrilled to use the ESS. It is simple, straightforward, and easy to use. And it saves teachers time.

After completing one of the four services available through ESS, users are asked to complete an online survey regarding the system. When asked, "Did you find this service easy to use?" 95 percent of respondents answered "Yes". When asked, "Did the service offer all of the options/features that you needed?" Again 95 percent of respondents answered "Yes". In addition, feedback included the following quotes:

- "This was easy, easy, easy. Thanks."
 - "Great system, very easy and quick!"
 - "No suggestions for improvement, great!"
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Teachers are incredibly satisfied with this program and the USOE is pleased with the simplification and time saved from the Educator Services Suite.