



**SALT LAKE
EDUCATION
FOUNDATION**

Cultivating Resources for Salt Lake City's Public Schools

March 30, 2022

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support – Salt Lake City RAISE Planning Grant 2022

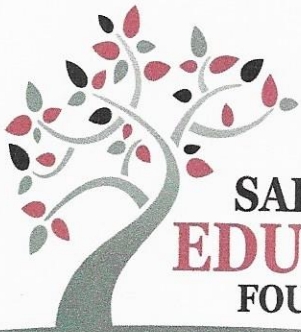
Dear Secretary, Buttigieg:

On behalf of **Salt Lake Education Foundation**, I write in support of Salt Lake City's initiative to address east-west connections across the I-15 and north-south rail corridors, particularly for people walking, biking, and taking transit.

The Salt Lake Education Foundation (SLEF) works alongside SLCS D to provide resources and opportunities for students and their families. SLEF is the only recognized 501 (c) (3) Type 1 organization serving the district as its nonprofit vehicle to secure resources that support student learning. SLEF cultivates relationships with stakeholders to ensure all students are college and career ready by the time they exit high school. This is done by prioritizing allocation of resources to academic and out of school programs, and by forming and maintaining school, community, and corporate partnerships, that provides student and family support throughout each student's PK-12 experience.

Salt Lake City School District demographic make-up as of October 2021 was 56.06% low income, 31.79% English as a second language at home, and 13% receiving special education services. We want to prepare our students, starting from preschool, to pursue pathways in the fields that lead to college, career attainment, and long-term economic viability for themselves and their families. Providing equitable access to academic teaching and learning opportunities for all students is our goal, and that is why the transportation divide matters so much in the work we do every single day. Students and families require greater access to transportation, and the east-west connections proposal will provide a safety, sustainability, and equity opportunity for the families, and community we serve.

As the director of the Salt Lake Education Foundation, I am deeply committed to this east-west connection project. I believe it is essential that we keep working to foster partnerships that assure the safety, well-being, and equitable recovery of every individual in the district. The Salt Lake Education Foundation has actively collaborated with multiple agencies, organizations, government entities and public and private donors to ensure emergency relief



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and support for students and families in Salt Lake City School District. Most importantly, the foundation has established over 200 verified partners, with district leadership, to support our COVID-19 efforts and to ensure district-wide access to resources. For this reason, the Salt Lake Education foundation will actively participate in giving input on the east-west planning and design project.

I support Salt Lake City's grant application to the federal RAISE program to conduct a comprehensive planning project to make improvements to multiple east-west crossings between 600 North and 2100 South. This work will improve our community.

Sincerely,

James E. Yapias, MAED

Salt Lake Education Foundation and Development Office