

R277. Education, Administration.

R277-920. School Improvement and Leadership Development.

R277-920-1. Authority, Purpose, and Oversight Category.

(1) This rule is authorized by:

(a) Utah Constitution Article X, Section 3, which vests general control and supervision over public education in the Board;

(b) Subsection 53E-3-401(4), which allows the Board to make rules to execute the Board's duties and responsibilities under the Utah Constitution and state law; and

(c) Title 53E, Chapter 5, Part 3, School Improvement and Leadership Development, which requires the Board to make rules to establish:

(i) an appeal process for the denial of a school improvement plan;

(ii) provisions regarding funding distributed to a springboard school or elevate school;

(iii) criteria for granting an extension to a springboard school;

(iv) criteria for exiting a school that has demonstrated sufficient improvement;

(v) implications for a springboard school; and

(vi) eligibility criteria, application procedures, selection criteria, and procedures for awarding incentive pay for the School Leadership Development Program.

(2) The purpose of this rule is to:

(a) enact provisions governing school improvement efforts; and

(b) implement and administer Title 53E, Chapter 5, Part 3, School Improvement and Leadership Development.

(3) This rule is categorized as Category 4 as described in Rule R277-111.

R277-920-2. Definitions.

(1) "Appeal committee" means the committee established by Section R277-920-6.

(2) "Baseline performance" means the percentage of possible points earned by a school through the school accountability system in the year the school was identified as a springboard school.

(3) "Committee" means a school improvement committee established in accordance with Subsection 53E-5-303(1) or 53E-5-304(4).

(4) "Continuous improvement expert" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53E-5-301.

(5) "Elevate school" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53E-5-301.

(6) "High performing charter school" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53E-5-306.

(7) "Non-Title I school" means a school that does not receive funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Title I, 20 U.S.C. Sec. 6301 et seq.

(8) "School leader" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53E-5-309.

(9) "School improvement plan" means a school improvement plan described in Section R277-920-8.

(10) "School improvement program" means the school improvement and leadership development program described in Title 53E, Chapter 5, Part 3, School Improvement and Leadership Development.

(11) "Springboard school" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53E-5-301.

(12) "State review panel" means a state review panel appointed by the Superintendent that includes at least three members who each have demonstrated expertise in two or more of the following fields:

- (a) leadership at the school district or school level;
- (b) standards-based elementary or secondary curriculum instruction and assessment;
- (c) instructional data management and analysis;
- (d) educational program evaluation;
- (e) educational program management;
- (f) teacher leadership;
- (g) change management;
- (h) organizational management; or

- (i) school budgeting and finance.

R277-920-3. Identification of Springboard and Elevate Schools.

(1) The Superintendent shall recommend springboard schools every four years after release of assessment data consistent with Subsection 53E-5-302(1)(a).

(2) In every year the Board does not designate springboard schools, the Superintendent shall recommend elevate schools consistent with Section 53E-5-302.1.

(3)(a) If an elevate school meets the criteria for a springboard school, the school shall move to springboard school status.

(b) A re-designated springboard school shall begin on the springboard timeline and meet all springboard exit criteria.

(c) The Superintendent shall consider all of a school's accomplishments under elevate status in evaluating progress towards springboard exit criteria.

(4) The Superintendent shall:

(a) accept applications as described in Subsection 53E-5-302.1(1)(a);

(b) identify elevate schools as described in Subsection 53E-5-302.1(1)(b); and

(c) conduct a needs assessment for each elevate school as described in Subsection 53E-5-302.1(1)(c).

R277-920-4. Superintendent Review of Continuous Improvement Expert Proposals for Springboard and Elevate Schools.

(1) The Superintendent shall review and approve a springboard or elevate school's proposal described in Subsection 53E-5-303(1)(d).

(2) A local education board of a springboard or elevate school shall submit evidence of compliance with Subsection 53E-5-303(1) or Subsection 53E-5-304(4) to the Superintendent within one year of identification.

R277-920-5. School Improvement Plan Submission and Approval Process for Springboard and Elevate Schools.

(1)(a) A local education board may approve or deny a plan in whole or in part, if the part of the plan the board denies is severable from the part of the plan the board approves.

(b) A local education board shall give a reason for a denial of each part of a plan.

(2) A local education board shall submit a school improvement plan in accordance with Subsection 53E-5-303(7) or Subsection 53E-5-304(9) to the Board.

(3) In accordance with Subsection 53E-5-305(3), the Board may review and approve or deny a school improvement plan in whole or in part, if the part of the school improvement plan the Board denies is severable from the part of the school improvement plan the Board approves.

R277-920-6. Appeal Process for Denial of a Springboard or Elevate School Improvement Plan.

(1) A committee or local education board may appeal the denial of a plan, in whole or in part, by following the procedures and requirements of this section.

(2) An appeal authorized by this rule:

(a) is an informal adjudicative proceeding under Section 63G-4-203; and

(b) shall be resolved by the date specified in Subsection 53E-5-305(6)(b).

(3)(a) A principal, on behalf of a committee, may request that the local education board reconsider the denial of a plan:

(i) by electronically filing the request:

(A) with the chair of the local education board; and

(B) on a form provided on the Board website; and

(ii) within five business days of the denial.

(b) The reconsideration request may include a modification to the plan if the committee approves the modification.

(c) The local education board shall respond to the request within five business days by:

(i) refusing to reconsider its action;

(ii) approving a plan, in whole or in part; or

(iii) denying a plan modification.

(d) The principal may appeal the denial of a plan under this Subsection (3):

(i) by electronically filing an appeal with the Superintendent on a form provided on the Board website; and

(ii) within five business days of the denial.

(e) An appeal filed under this subsection shall be resolved in accordance with Subsections (4) and (5).

(4) A district superintendent, on behalf of a local school board, or a charter school governing board chair, on behalf of a charter school governing board, may appeal the Board's denial of a plan:

(a) by electronically filing an appeal with the Superintendent on a form provided on the Board website; and

(b) within five business days of the denial.

(5)(a) At least three members of a Board committee, appointed by the Board as the appeal committee, shall review the written appeal.

(b) The appeal committee may ask the principal, district superintendent, local school board chair, or charter school governing board chair to:

(i) provide additional written information; or

(ii) appear personally and provide information.

(c) The appeal committee shall make a written recommendation within five business days of receipt of the appeal request to the Board to accept, modify, or reject the plan and give a reason for the recommendation.

(6) The Board may accept or reject the appeal committee's recommendation and the Board's decision is the final administrative action.

R277-920-7. Springboard and Elevate School Program Funding.

(1) Subject to legislative appropriations, the Superintendent shall distribute at least \$375,000 one-time per springboard or elevate school to each local education board of a springboard or elevate school.

(2)(a) The local education board shall use at least a portion of the funding distributed under Subsections (2) and (3) to contract with a continuous improvement expert, including travel costs, in accordance with Sections 53E-5-303 and 53E-5-304.

(b) A local education board shall use funding available after the allocation of funds under Subsection (4)(a) only for interventions identified in a school improvement plan.

(3) The Superintendent may review uses of funds and contracts with continuous improvement experts.

(4) The Superintendent may provide funding to a school that remains in the school improvement program beyond the school's identified exit year.

R277-920-8. School Leadership Development Program.

(1) An eligible school leader who meets the requirements of Section 53E-5-309 may apply to participate in the School Leadership Development Program by electronically submitting an application to the Superintendent on a form and by the date specified on the Board website.

(2) The Superintendent shall select up to 15 school leaders to participate in the School Leadership Development Program based on the following selection criteria:

(a) first priority shall be given to a school leader who has not received prior School Leadership Development Program training; and

(b) second priority shall be given to a school leader who is assigned to a springboard school or elevate school.

(3)(a) In accordance with Subsection 53E-5-309(4), the Superintendent shall award incentive pay to a school leader within 90 days after:

(i) the school leader completes the School Leadership Development Program; and

(ii) the school leader's LEA verifies that the school leader entered into a written agreement as described in Subsection 53E-5-309(4).

(b) The Superintendent shall distribute \$400 per full-day session to a school leader who completes the School Leadership Development Program sessions.

R277-920-9. Exit Criteria for a Springboard School -- Extensions -- More Rigorous Interventions.

(1) To exit the springboard school program, a springboard school shall demonstrate, in the third or fourth year after which the school was identified as a springboard school, that the school:

(a) meets individualized exit criteria that is calculated by reducing the gap in performance by one-third between:

(i) the springboard school's baseline performance; and

(ii)(A) 55% of the total points possible for a school that is an elementary or middle school; or

(B) 57% of the total points possible for a school that enrolls students in grade 12; and

(b) exceeds the lowest 5% of all schools in the ranking of schools from the year the school was identified.

(2) In determining whether a school has met the criteria described in Subsection (1), the Superintendent shall apply the indicators, weightings, and threshold scores described in the version of Title 53E, Chapter 5, Part 2, School Accountability System that was in place when the school was identified.

(3) If a school does not meet the exit criteria described in Subsection (1) in the fourth year after which the school was identified as a springboard school, the school may qualify for an extension to continue current school improvement efforts for up to two years if the school:

(a)(i)(A) reduced the gap in performance by one-fourth between:

(I) the school's baseline performance; and

(II)(Aa) 55% of the total points possible for a school that is an elementary or middle school; or

(Bb) 57% of the total points possible for a school that enrolls students in grade 12; and

(B) exceeds at least the lowest 3% of all schools in the ranking of schools from the year the school was scheduled to exit; or

(ii) has met only one of the exit criteria described in Subsection (1); and

(b) electronically files an extension request with the Superintendent within 15 days of the release of school accountability results, that provides rationale justifying an extension.

(4) If a school identified as a springboard school does not meet the exit criteria described in Subsection (1) or qualify for an extension as described in Subsection (3) the following groups shall make a recommendation to the Board on what action the Board should take:

(a) a state review panel, described in Subsection (6);

(b) if the school is a district school, the local school board, with input from the community as described in Subsection (7); and

(c) if the school is a charter school, the charter school authorizer with input from the community as described in Subsection (7).

(5) The groups described in Subsection (4) shall make a recommendation within 90 days of the release of school accountability results on whether the Board should:

(a) require personnel changes, including replacement of school leaders or teachers;

(b) if the school is a district school:

(i) require involuntary transfers of school leaders or teachers;

(ii) require the local school board to change school boundaries;

(iii) temporarily appoint a public or non-profit entity other than the local school board to manage and operate the school; or

(iv) permanently transfer control of a school to a public or non-profit entity other than the local education board;

(c) if the school is a charter school:

(i) require that the charter school governing board be replaced; or

(ii) require that the charter school authorizer close the school; or

(d) if the school is a charter school, require that the charter school authorizer:

(i) replace some or all members of the charter school governing board;

(ii) transfer operation and control of the charter school to:

(A) a high performing charter school; or

(B) the school district in which the charter school is located; or

(iii) close the school; or

(e) take other action.

(6)(a) The Superintendent shall appoint members of a state review panel.

(b) The state review panel shall critically evaluate at least:

(i) whether the local education agency has the capacity to implement the changes necessary to improve school performance;

(ii) whether the school leadership is adequate to implement change to improve school performance;

(iii) whether the school has sufficient authority to implement change;

(iv) whether the plan is being implemented with fidelity;

(v) whether the state and local education board provided sufficient resources to the school to support school improvement efforts, including whether the local school board prioritized school district funding and resources to the school in accordance with Section 53E-5-303;

(vi) the likelihood that performance can be improved within the current management structure and staffing; and

(vii) the necessity that the school remain in operation to serve students.

(7) An LEA and charter school authorizer shall develop recommendations under this section in collaboration with:

(a) parents of students currently attending the springboard school;

(b) teachers, principals, and other school leaders at the school;

(c) stakeholders representing the interests of students with disabilities, English learners, and other vulnerable student populations; and

(d) other community members and community partners.

R277-920-13. Exit Criteria for Elevate Schools.

An elevate school may exit after successful completion of:

(1) four years participating in the implementation of a continuous improvement cycle, including working with the elevate school's continuous improvement expert; and

(2) Beginning with the 2026-2027 Elevate cohort, the exit criteria in place for targeted support and improvement or additional targeted support and improvement for student groups under the state's ESSA plan.

KEY: principals, school improvements, school leaders

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Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: Art X, Sec 3; 53E-3-401(4); Title 53E, Chapter 5, Part 3