



NEWS RELEASE

Utah State Board of Education

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Eighteen of 26 schools successfully exit Utah school turnaround program

SALT LAKE CITY — Nearly 90 percent of schools that first entered Utah’s school turnaround program in 2015 have met exit criteria or have qualified for an extension, according to new data released by the Utah State Board of Education.

Of the 26 schools in the program’s first cohort, 18 will exit after increasing at least one letter grade. An additional five qualify for an extension, two will remain in the program, and one school has closed.

Utah’s School Turnaround and Leadership Development Act, passed by the Utah Legislature in 2015, aims to identify and provide outside resources to low-performing schools.

“I have visited many of these schools and been impressed by the strategic work and targeted resources to close achievement gaps and improve academic outcomes for each student,” said Sydnee Dickson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The Utah State Board of Education will determine next steps for the schools not identified for exit this year. Additionally, extension details for schools that qualified will be determined at a later date.

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School principal statements

Of the 18 schools that will exit the program, five reported improvements of two or more letter grades since identification in 2015. Leadership at those schools provided attributable statements below:

Mont Harmon Middle (Carbon School District)

“The journey that Mont Harmon Middle School has traveled over the past three years has been grounded in the central belief that everything we do in every moment of the day is for and about our students. As a school and community family, we knew this cultural change had to happen for the school and the students to start seeing an increase in success. There are two guiding questions that we ask of ourselves as a staff at MHMS. The first question we ask, “Is this about the student as an individual?” The second question we ask ourselves is, “If this were my own child sitting across from me, what would I be willing to do to see them succeed?”

This change in our central ideals has led to a positive-growth mindset in the school and in our community. We have found that through hard work, based on caring for students, has allowed for the implementation of highly functioning Professional Learning Communities with clear essential standards and visible learning throughout the school. Although the journey has been difficult, the school community that we are today is amazing and completely unrecognizable from who and what we were three years ago.”

Seth Allred, principal

Monument Valley High (San Juan School District)

“MVHS currently classifies 68 percent of students as English Learners, 70 percent as homeless per McKinney Vento, 98 percent Native American, and 100 percent as Economically Disadvantaged. Successful turnaround efforts at MVHS have been a team effort. Our goals have been to create and maintain high academic standards, create a supportive, restorative justice learning environment where kids can thrive and teachers feel supported, and improve our classroom instruction. Our district office has supported these goals by putting in systems of support where needed.

Along with our turnaround partner, Innovations Education Consulting, the quality of our classroom instruction to support our goals of academic achievement has greatly improved. Hiring and retaining quality teachers that foster a growth mindset continues to be a top priority for sustaining school improvement. Monitoring data, strengthening teacher collaboration and accountability, and school wide classroom instructional efforts have made the difference in student growth. It is exciting to see the work, that our teachers and students are putting in, pay off!”

Spencer Singer, principal

Bonneville School (Ogden School District)

“We began with an honest assessment of Bonneville Elementary. There was discouragement and apathy among students, staff, and parents. Scores were at an all-time low and so was morale. We knew we needed dramatic change; and it was difficult to not try to fix everything at once. When we began, our plan was too big. Midway through the year we narrowed the focus even further. We created a theme of ‘hitting the targets,’ complete with an archery lesson and training to position ourselves to hit those targets. During a classroom observation I realized that the teacher was using every single instructional and management strategy we had implemented. The students were engaged and responded to everything that we had been working toward. I teared up watching the interactions between her and her students and how excited they were about learning.”

Janice Bukey, former principal

“We will build on the positive culture by focusing on social emotional learning. Our students are just as bright, and our staff works just as hard as anywhere else. We just needed the right systems and the right plan to allow our school to thrive.”

Shauntelle Cota, current principal

Mana Academy (charter)

“Regardless of the challenges we faced, we were adamant about creating a school culture that was always students first. We prioritized building relationships with our students and their families. We visited their homes, we invited them to be our partners in this work, we embraced the diverse languages and cultures of our families, and we integrated curriculum that validates and sustains the cultural identities of our students. We created common goals around classroom instruction, teacher collaboration, and high student expectations. We built an environment of transparency around school data and shared it frequently with our staff, our parents, and our students. We celebrated our progress, no matter how small. We implemented with fidelity the plans we created with our trusted consultants and partners, but most importantly, we love our students! They inspire us to be better educators, to be more creative and innovative, and to never give up. Mana Academy’s progress represents endless possibilities for our students, families, and communities.”

‘Anapesi Ka’ili, Director & Principal

West Lake Junior High (Granite School District)

“At West Lake Junior High, we have aligned our teacher schedules and working spaces to facilitate constant collaboration to systematically answer the questions: What do we want our students to learn? How will we know when each student has learned it? How will we respond when some students don’t learn it or already know it? Three classrooms were merged into a collaboration hub to allow teachers close access to one another as they look at data and answer these questions. We focus heavily on teacher-to-family relationships that include faculty home visits and Academic Parent Teacher Team (APTT) Conferences with an emphasis on each student reaching a personal best. All students receive individual goal sheets throughout the year that outline clearly their past performance on reading inventory and standardized assessments and establish goals for a new personal best. Additionally, we use proficiency-based grading to allow all students to track their own progress against the state standards. At West Lake, we embrace the STEM philosophy to try, fail, and try again until we succeed, and we celebrate each win along the way.”

Tyler Howe, principal

LEA	School	2015 Grade	2018 Grade
Carbon District	Mont Harmon Middle	D	A
Mana Academy Charter School	Mana Academy Charter School	F	C
Ogden City District	Bonneville School	F	C
Granite District	West Lake Jr High	D	B
C.S. Lewis Academy	C.S. Lewis Academy	D	C
San Juan District	Tse'Bii'Nidzizgai School	F	D
San Juan District	Monument Valley High	F	C
Granite District	South Kearns School	D	C
Dual Immersion Academy	Dual Immersion Academy	F	D
Davis District	Vae View School	D	C
Granite District	Lincoln School	D	C
Granite District	Granger School	D	C
Alpine District	Cedar Valley School	D	C

LEA	School	2015 Grade	2018 Grade
San Juan District	Bluff School	F	D
Granite District	Thomas W. Bacchus School	D	C
Granite District	Woodrow Wilson School	D	D
Granite District	Thomas Jefferson Jr High	D	C
Kane District	Big Water School	F	D
San Juan District	Whitehorse High	F	F
*Pioneer High School for the Performing Arts	Pioneer High School for the Performing Arts	F	F
Granite District	Roosevelt School	F	D
Utah Connections Academy	Utah Connections Academy	F	F
Entheos Academy	Entheos Academy Magna	D	D
Granite District	Redwood School	D	D
Canyons District	Midvale School	D	F
Granite District	Oquirrh Hills School	D	F

ADA Compliant 10/4/18