



# Education Exchange:

## Where Families and Schools Meet

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### Why Family Engagement Matters

Research shows that when families are involved in education, students are more likely to:

- Come to school regularly
- Build strong social skills
- Earn better grades
- Graduate from high school
- Continue on to college or other training

### Here to Help: Your Family Engagement Team



#### Cassie Hays

Parent Liaison and Engagement Specialist

Cassie brings nearly 30 years of experience in K-12 education. She has taught, led online learning programs, and founded a charter school. Cassie supports families and schools in building strong partnerships that help students succeed.

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#### Susie Estrada

School Improvement and Special Education Parent Engagement Specialist

Susie has over 17 years of experience in education, including early learning, after-school programs, special education, and curriculum. She is passionate about equity, family voice, and creating systems that support every learner.

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### Understanding Parent Rights in Public Education

Utah's Constitution and laws recognize that parents play the most important role in their child's education.

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) values the trust families place in public schools and is committed to supporting parents every step of the way.

**Learn More About Parent Rights:**  
[tinyurl.com/UT-ParentRights](http://tinyurl.com/UT-ParentRights)



Utah State Board of Education



# Utah 2026 Legislative Session

## What Parents Should Know

Each year, Utah's state lawmakers meet during the General Session to review current laws, propose new legislation, and make decisions that affect funding, policies, and programs across the state—including public education. During this 45-day session, legislators introduce and vote on bills that can directly impact students, families, and schools. The information below highlights several proposed bills from the 2026 session that may be especially relevant to parents and caregivers.

### Session at a Glance

- **January 20, 2026:** First day of the annual General Session.
- **March 6, 2026:** Last day of the annual General Session (45 total days, excluding state and federal holidays)
- **May 6, 2026:** Normal effective date for bills

**Follow Along: Utah Legislature web page [le.utah.gov](http://le.utah.gov)**



## Resources for Military Families and Purple Star Schools

Military families and students often face unique challenges — from frequent moves to transitioning between schools and support systems. Utah's Military Families and Purple Star Schools resources are designed to help you navigate those challenges with information, guidance, and support specific to your needs. This includes tools for school enrollment, transitions between districts, social-emotional supports, and connections with schools that have earned the Purple Star designation for excellence in serving military families. Learn more about what support is available and how your family can benefit:

[www.schools.utah.gov/parent/militaryfamilies](http://www.schools.utah.gov/parent/militaryfamilies)

## Preschool Parent Resources

Early childhood education is an important foundation for your child's learning and development. Utah offers a variety of resources to help parents find high-quality preschool programs and support learning at home.

- **High-Quality Preschool Information:** Learn what makes a [preschool program](#) high-quality and how to find one.
- **Utah Early Learning Standards:** Outlines the [skills and knowledge](#) children are expected to develop before kindergarten.
- **Early Learning Standards Strategies & Activities:** [Practical activities](#) for teaching each standard at home, organized by subject area (including Spanish versions).
- **Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University:** Guides and activities to support executive functioning and overall development.

## Finding a Preschool

Preschool is optional in Utah and offered in schools, childcare centers, [Head Start](#) programs, and private providers. Use resources like [TIGERweb](#), [GreatSchools](#), or [Care About Childcare](#) to locate programs in your area. You can also explore the [UPSTART](#) program, a state-supported online preschool program for children at home.

## Utah Parent Center Resources

- **Utah Parent Center:** [utahparentcenter.org/publication/parents-as-partners](http://utahparentcenter.org/publication/parents-as-partners)
- **Utah Parent Center Resource Book:** [tinyurl.com/UtahParentBook](http://tinyurl.com/UtahParentBook)



## Family & Community Connections

- » Utah's [Every Day Counts](#) attendance campaign encourages families to build strong habits that support learning and engagement at school. Be part of the movement!
- » To further support families, schools continue to share helpful community resources for parents, including those available through the [Utah State Board of Education](#).
- » This year also invites students to reflect on their role in our shared civic story through [America250](#), a state and nationwide initiative commemorating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. As part of this effort, students will participate in a writing essay that explores what America means to them.