



PREVENTION BLOCK GRANT APPLICATION RESOURCES

September 2026

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OVERVIEW

The Utah Prevention Block Grant was established to streamline and strengthen school-based prevention efforts. Authorized under [Utah Code Section 53F-2-525](#) and guided by Utah State [Board of Education Administrative Rules \(Board Rules\) R277-439](#)¹, this grant empowers Local Education Agencies (LEAs), meaning Districts and Charters, to implement comprehensive prevention plans that address shared risk and protective factors while incorporating state prevention requirements.

Awarded funds are intended for **Tier 1 and Tier 2 prevention activities**, including:

- Implementation of a comprehensive prevention plan
- Prevention-focused parent seminars
- Professional learning in prevention science
- Supplies and materials for evidence-based programs

This resource document is designed to support LEAs as they prepare to complete the Prevention Block Grant application. It offers guidance, tools, and best practices to maximize the impact of LEA prevention efforts.

¹ N.B.: Utah Board of Education Administrative Rules (Board Rules) fall under the Utah Admin. Code under title R277. These rules can be found in two places: the [USB E Administrative Rules webpage](#) or the [Utah Office Administrative Rules webpage](#). Therefore, Board Rules R277-609 refers to the same rule as Utah Admin. Code R277-609. Similarly, though the Utah State Board of Education Special Education Rules (SpEd Rules) appear as a separate set of rules distinguished from Board Rules, they are in fact incorporated into Board Rules by reference (see [Board Rules R277-750](#)).

FOUNDATIONS OF PREVENTION

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROTECTIVE FACTOR FRAMEWORK

The goal of school-based prevention work is to design and implement approaches that will help promote the knowledge, attitude, and skills necessary for students to lead productive and meaningful lives, both in the present and in the future. Put simply, prevention work is meant to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors so that students can thrive.

The Protective Factor Framework is a **research-based** and **evidence-informed approach** to prevention work that has demonstrated the ability to **increase the well-being of both children and families** by **reducing the risk of unhealthy behaviors**. When implemented, research has shown that the protective factor framework can increase the probability of positive outcomes **even in the presence of risk and adversity**. When used in education, it helps education staff to identify **the five characteristics or attributes we need to focus on most** for students to reduce or eliminate risk factors and actively enhance their well-being.

The Protective Factor Framework is not a “program” or “intervention.” It is a way to think about and organize prevention work **in order to have the most impact**. The Framework can and should be **implemented into existing prevention approaches, practices, and programs** through making small, strategic adjustments to the everyday work that schools are already doing. Recognizing how to address and build these five Protective Factors into our work with students provides a solid base for the success of prevention work in schools. **The highest quality programs ensure that each of these five protective factors is addressed while serving students.**

The following provides more information about the Protective Factor Framework, defines each protective factor in an educational setting, and describes how schools can systematically build and support each of the five protective factors. Many of

these approaches are already being utilized in schools. Prevention work will be most effective when all five protective factors are intentionally addressed and reinforced.



Figure 1: The Five Protective Factors

THE FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS

1. Concrete Supports in Times of Need

a. Students

- i. have access to quality services that meet their basic needs
- ii. feel safe and regulated
- iii. know how to ask for help and advocate for themselves
- iv. Basic needs include nutrition, clothing, shelter, healthcare, sleep, and a safe school environment

b. Schools Support by:

- i. providing resources to help students and families access concrete supports, when needed
- ii. deliberately teaching and helping students practice skills to support self-advocacy
- iii. creating a culture where seeking help is viewed as a strength

2. Knowledge of Development

a. Students:

- i. understand important aspects of human and brain development, including the effects of trauma
- ii. believe that intelligence is not fixed and is something that can be influenced through hard work and effort

b. Schools Support By:

- i. helping parents and teachers understand child development and age-appropriate behaviors
- ii. implementing policies and procedures that reflect a deep understanding of child and adolescent development
- iii. creating a trauma sensitive school environment
- iv. facilitating knowledge / belief that intelligence can be influenced through effort and hard work

3. Social Connections

a. Students:

- i. have healthy, sustained relationships with peers and adults that promote a sense of trust, belonging, safety, and a sense that they matter

b. Schools Support By:

- i. helping students develop the social skills necessary for forming and sustaining healthy relationships
- ii. facilitating opportunities for students to develop healthy relationships with adults and peers
- iii. create a culture of school connectedness

4. Resilience

a. Students:

- i. have the ability and skills to manage stress and function well when faced with stressors, challenges, and/or adversity

- ii. have hope and a sense of optimism for the future

b. Schools Support By:

- i. integrating a strength-based approach into their culture and climate to help students develop a resilient mindset
- ii. working with students to develop their plans for the future

5. Cognitive, Emotional, and Social Competence

a. Students:

- i. acquire the skills and knowledge that are essential to forming an independent, positive identity and having a productive adulthood, such as: executive functioning skills, self-regulation skills, self-awareness, self-esteem, empathy for others, positive coping skills, etc.

b. Schools Support By:

- i. understanding and emphasizing that cognitive, emotional, and social competence is important to help students achieve academic success
- ii. incorporating direct and indirect instructional opportunities for students to learn and practice skills which will build emotional intelligence, academic success, and workforce readiness

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Risk factors are conditions that increase the likelihood that youth will become involved in problem behaviors in adolescence and young adulthood, while protective factors are conditions or attributes that can help mitigate risks.*

Prevention interventions aim to support or bolster protective factors, which give youth the resources and strengths they need to avoid substance misuse and other problem behaviors.

1. Community

a. Risk Factors:

- i. Low neighborhood attachment
- ii. Laws & norms favorable to drug use
- iii. Perceived availability of drugs

b. Protective Factors:

- i. Rewards for prosocial involvement
- ii. Feeling of safety and connection in the community

2. Family

a. Risk Factors:

- i. Poor family management
- ii. Family conflict
- iii. Family history of the problem behavior
- iv. Parental attitudes favorable to the problem behavior

b. Protective Factors:

- i. Family attachment
- ii. Opportunities for prosocial involvement
- iii. Rewards for prosocial involvement
- iv. Parents have a knowledge of child developmental issues

3. Individual/Peer

a. Risk Factors:

- i. Rebelliousness
- ii. Early initiation of the problem behavior
- iii. Friends who engage in the problem behavior
- iv. Favorable attitudes toward the problem behavior

b. Protective Factors:

- i. Cognitive, social emotional, behavioral competence

- ii. Self-efficacy
- iii. Optimism about the future
- iv. Self-determination
- v. Pro-social norms
- vi. Belief in the moral order
- vii. Healthy connections with others
- viii. Knowledge of drug use's potential consequences

4. School

a. Risk Factors:

- i. Academic failure
- ii. Low commitment to school
- iii. Feeling unsafe at school
- iv. Few adult or peer connections at school

b. Protective Factors:

- i. Opportunities for prosocial involvement
- ii. Rewards for prosocial involvement
- iii. A culture of growth mindset

* The presence of risk factors and/or the lack of protective factors is not a guarantee of the development of problem behaviors, but their presence has been proven to be strong predictors of problem behaviors.

IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE IN PREVENTION

IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE OVERVIEW

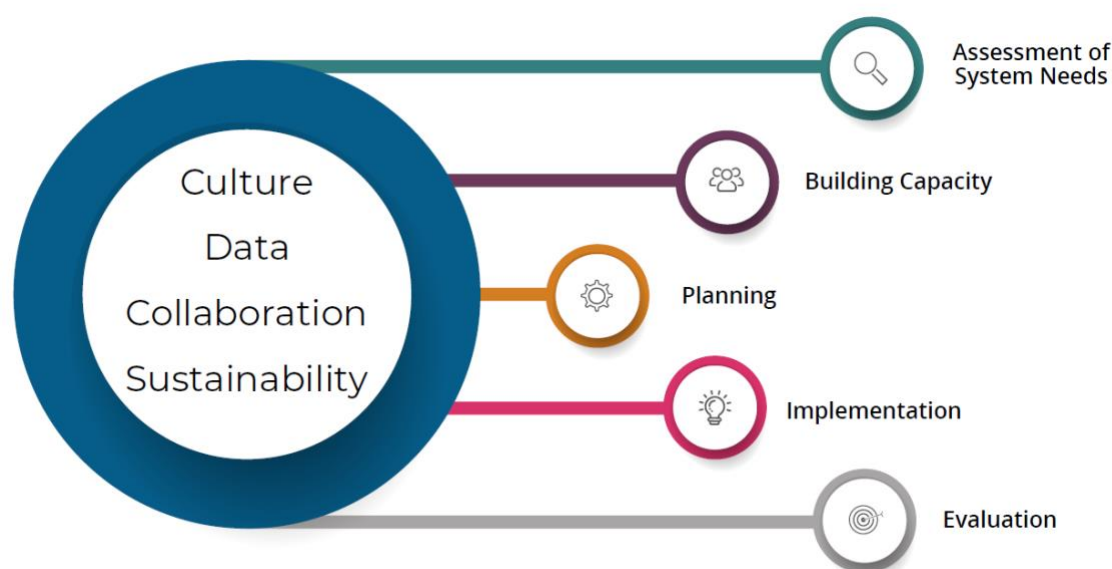


Figure 2: The Implementation Science Framework

Figure 2 is a framework adapted from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\) Strategic Prevention Framework](#). It is being utilized by the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) to inform planning and implementation of school-based mental health and wellness initiatives, including Utah's School Behavioral Health toolkit, Trauma-Sensitive schools professional learning and initiatives, and prevention efforts.

The purpose of the framework is to guide LEA administrators in understanding how to sustainably implement effective programs, initiatives, projects, interventions, etc. that address complex behavioral health problems within the context and environment of education. The framework also provides a well-tested, scientific approach and process for prevention and mental wellness that, when

implemented, will help LEAs successfully address the behavioral, emotional, social, and wellness needs of students.

The framework includes five stages, with four guiding principles.

The five stages are:

Assessment of System Needs: Identifying local needs based on data—qualitative and quantitative—and input from stakeholders

- *What are the problems we need to address? Who needs to be involved in helping us understand, and how do we involve them?*

Building Capacity: Building local resources and readiness to address the needs identified in the assessment

- *What resources do we currently have access to that we can work with, and what other resources exist that could be utilized?*

Planning: Finding out what works to address needs, and designing a plan for how to implement those activities within the specific context of your LEA or school—using the information learned from the assessment and the resources that have been identified—

- *What strategies should we use, and how do we design the steps to implement those strategies? How can we make it most relevant for our school community?*

Implementation: Putting the plan into action and delivering the evidence-based or evidence-informed strategies, as intended

- *How do we put the plan into action? What modifications may need to be made as we implement that we did not account for?*

Evaluation: Examining the process of implementation and the outcomes of programs and practices

- *Are we succeeding at addressing the issue, and how can we tell? What is working well? What is missing? What changes need to be made for the future?*

The four guiding principles should be considered and integrated into each stage:

Culture: The LEA understands the needs of and interacts effectively with diverse populations in their school community, and pays attention to the considerations needed for their unique school culture and climate

Data: The LEA gathers and uses data to guide all decisions and understands the importance of utilizing both qualitative and quantitative measures. The LEA understands that data analysis is about more than numbers; instead it is about the stories and patterns that the data reveals.

Collaboration: The LEA values the input of community partners and understands the importance of identifying, collaborating, and engaging with all relevant stakeholders, including families and students. Stakeholders are viewed as true partners and their input is seen as critical to the entire process. The LEA also understands that sustained success will be limited without key stakeholder voice and input.

Sustainability: The LEA recognizes the need to build adaptive and effective processes that will achieve long-term results and endure, despite challenges, barriers, and system change

There is no well-tested, pre-identified package of training or strategies that will fit the needs of all LEAs and address the complex, multi-faceted behavioral health and wellness issues of all student populations. The framework, however, provides a process that allows for the diverse needs of LEAs across the state to be considered.

As administrators understand and utilize the stages and principles outlined in the framework, they will be able to understand the key issues facing their LEA and individualize plans and strategies to best meet the unique needs of the students within their LEA. In addition, because the needs of communities and students evolve over time, this framework should be thought of as an ongoing cyclical process, not as a linear process with a beginning and end. Using the framework as a way to address the ever-changing circumstances of our students will help programs, interventions, and activities remain relevant over time.

USING PREVENTION SCIENCE TO CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE PREVENTION PLAN WHILE CONSIDERING POSITIVE BEHAVIORS PLAN AND SUICIDE PREVENTION REQUIREMENTS

COMPREHENSIVE PREVENTION PLAN BACKGROUND ([UTAH CODE SECTION 53F-2-525](#)):

- Implements evidence-based early intervention and prevention practices tailored to achieve outcomes and mitigate risk factors in a manner consistent with:
 - [Substance abuse prevention programs](#)
 - [Youth suicide prevention programs](#)
 - [Positive behavior plans](#)
- Includes information on the impact of childhood trauma on student learning, including information advising educators against practicing medicine, giving a diagnosis or providing treatment
- Includes resiliency building skills
- Designed in collaboration with USBE and with input from parents, students, educators, and support staff

POSITIVE BEHAVIORS PLAN BACKGROUND:

As defined in [Utah Code Section 53G-10-407](#), a Positive Behaviors Plan is “a plan to address the causes of student use of tobacco, alcohol, electronic cigarette products, and other controlled substances through promoting positive behaviors.”

It might be helpful to think of the *positive behaviors* referenced in the positive behaviors plan definition as *protective factors*. Protective factors are factors or characteristics that have been found to decrease the risk of students engaging in problem behaviors. Some examples of protective factors include:

- Opportunities for positive social involvement
- Recognition for positive behavior
- Bonding to prosocial others
- Cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and social competence
- Self-efficacy
- Belief in the future

To request training on protective factors and other aspects of prevention science, please complete this form: [USB E Student Services Training Request Portal](#).

Answers to frequently asked questions can be found here: [Positive Behaviors Plan Utah Code Section 53G-10-407 FAQ](#).

SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM BACKGROUND:

As directed in [Utah Code Section 53G-9-702](#), all youth suicide prevention programs, in collaboration and coordination with bullying prevention programs ([Utah Code Section 53G-9-607](#)) and the underage drinking and substance abuse prevention program ([Utah Code Section 53G-10-406](#)), shall address:

- Life-affirming education with topics that include:
 - Resiliency
 - Healthy habits
 - Self-care
 - Problem-solving
 - Conflict resolution
- Methods of strengthening the family
- Methods of strengthening a youth's relationships in the school and community
- As directed in [Utah Code Section 53G-9-702](#), programs in Secondary Schools shall also address:
- Prevention of youth suicide
- Decreasing the risk of suicide among youth who are:
 - Not accepted by family for any reason including LGBTQ
 - Suffer from bullying

- Youth suicide intervention
- Postvention for family, students, and faculty

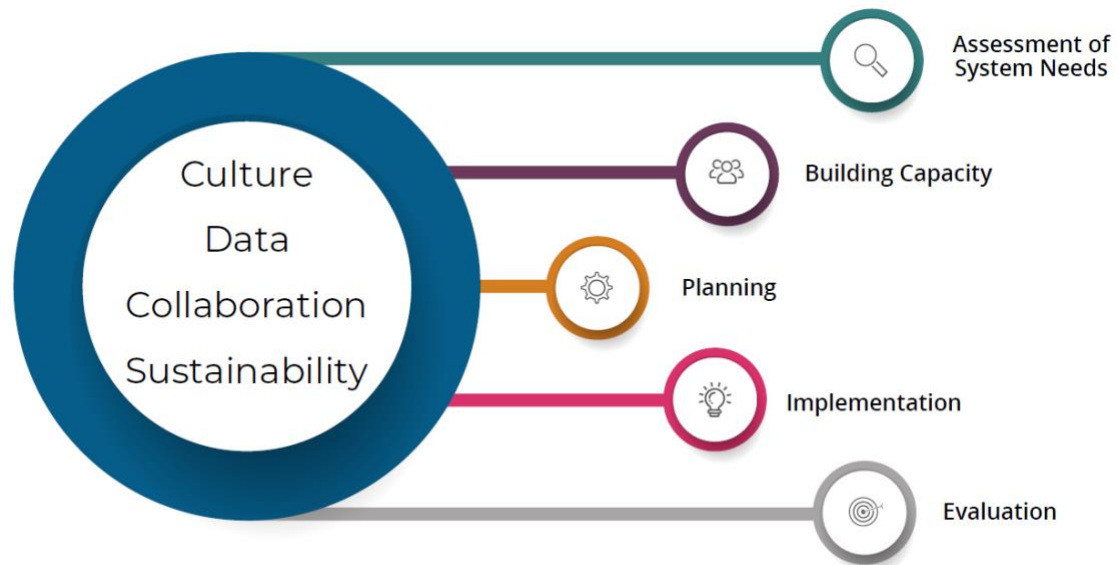


Figure 3: The Implementation Science Framework (repeat of figure 2)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES: CULTURE, DATA, COLLABORATION, SUSTAINABILITY

As you go through the process of creating and adjusting your school's plans, consider and integrate the following four guiding principles into each stage:

Culture:

- Understand the needs of the school community
- Intentionally create a positive, respectful environment for all students and staff

Data:

- Gather and use data to guide decisions
- Consider what patterns and stories the data reveals

Collaboration:

- Gather input from parents, students, and staff* throughout the process

- This can be done through surveys, focus groups, staff meetings, school community council meetings, and/or parent/student/teacher organizations
- Keep in mind that parent, student, and staff input and buy-in are critical to the success of the school's plan
- Invite community partners to the process

Sustainability:

- Build adaptive and effective processes that achieve results and endure despite potential challenges and staff changes

STAGES OF THE FRAMEWORK:

Assessment of Needs:

Step 1—Review school-level data: SHARP data, disciplinary data, school culture and climate surveys, etc.

Questions to consider:

- What protective factors are strong among the majority of students in our school and how can our plan build on these protective factors?
- What protective factors are not as strong among the majority of students in our school and how can our plan increase these protective factors?
- What risk factors are most common in our school and how can our plan decrease these risk factors?
- What are the most common concerns in our school? (absenteeism, bullying, childhood trauma, disruptive behaviors, gang involvement, mental health challenges, substance use, suicidal ideation, etc.)
- How can our plan address these concerns and behaviors?

Building Capacity:

Step 2—Take an inventory of what the school already has in place to address the school's needs, including the required elements of a positive behaviors plan and suicide prevention program.

Questions to consider:

- Are there already programs, clubs, service opportunities, and other pro-social activities in place that address the required elements listed below?
 - Peer pressure
 - Mental health
 - Creating meaningful relationships
 - Life-affirming education with topics that include:
 - Resiliency
 - Healthy habits
 - Self-care
 - Problem-solving
 - Conflict resolution
 - Methods of strengthening the family
 - Methods of strengthening a youth's relationships in the school and community
- What resources and strengths do we have to work with?
- What existing resources are available that we can more effectively
- Leverage?
- What professional development opportunities will our team need to be most effective?

Planning:

Step 3—Establish a plan.

Questions to consider:

- How can we help students gain skills that will help them:
 - Deal with peer pressure
 - Maintain and improve their mental health
 - Create meaningful relationships

- Learn resiliency
- Form healthy habits including self-care
- Problem solve
- Resolve conflict
- Strengthen family, school, and community relationships
- What other protective factors should we include in our plan?
- What evidence-based programs and best practices are in existence that address the required elements, as well as other protective factors that we would like to implement in the school?
 - A non-comprehensive list of evidence-based programs directories is found on the [USB E Substance Use Prevention Resources Page](#)
 - It may be helpful to collaborate with your Local Community Prevention Coordinator or Community Coalition regarding available evidence-based programs and best practices; see the [Location Map](#)
- What programs, best practices, clubs, service opportunities or other pro-social opportunities do parents, students, and staff prefer we implement?
- What professional development opportunities will we provide where personnel can learn about the impact of childhood trauma on student learning, while also including information advising educators against practicing medicine, giving a diagnosis or providing treatment?
- What opportunities will we provide where parents can learn about the impact of childhood trauma on student learning?

Implementation:

Step 4—Decide how the plan will be implemented.

Questions to consider:

- Where will the plan be implemented?
- When will the plan be implemented?

- How will we encourage student, parent, and school personnel participation?
- What barriers might we encounter, and how will we overcome them?

Note: Positive behaviors plans must go to the local school board for approval.

Evaluation:

Step 5—Review the plan on a regular basis and make adjustments as the needs of the school change.

Questions to consider:

- What outcome data will be collected?
- How will the data be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan?
- How will we determine if changes need to be made to the plan?

Regularly Repeat the Cycle:

Step 6—As new data is obtained, repeat steps 1–5 to ensure that the plan best meets the needs of the school.

PLANNING TOOLS FOR LEAS

[LEA Comprehensive Prevention Plan Template](#)

[Example Comprehensive Prevention Plan](#)

These planning tools support LEAs in developing a comprehensive, data-informed prevention plan aligned with grant expectations. **Please click each link to access the documents outside of this resource.** The template provides a structured format to guide your planning process, and the example demonstrates how components come together in practice.

A Comprehensive Prevention Plan is required as part of the grant application, and a version of the template will also be provided within the application.

STRATEGIC USE OF FUNDS

1. SUGGESTED USES OF FUNDING

UNALLOWABLE USES OF FUNDING

Please be aware that Prevention Block Grant funding is primarily meant for Tier 1 and Tier 2 prevention activities that support the LEA's comprehensive prevention plan.

Unallowable uses for funding as outlined in [Board Rules R277-439](#) include:

1. Food
2. Capital improvements
3. Metal detectors
4. Vape detectors

Prevention Block Grant Funding is not intended to be used for Tier 3 services for students, such as:

- Mental health treatment services for students
- Tier 3 services that serve known gang members

Additionally, Prevention Block Grants funding is not intended to be used for initiatives that have other existing USBE grants or contracts, such as:

- Child sexual abuse and/or human trafficking prevention instruction for elementary students
- Mental health screening for students
- School safety needs (such as school guardians and fire detection software)

If the LEA submits a reimbursement request for any of these items, please be aware that they will not be approved.

ALLOWABLE USES OF FUNDING

The following list is not comprehensive. If there are other programs your LEA would like to fund, please make sure to include rationale, data, and information about the program in the LEA's comprehensive prevention plan and the grant application:

- Attendance initiatives
- BRISC training for Counselors
- Bullying Prevention training and/or initiatives
- [Check and Connect Mentoring](#)
- Child Sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking Prevention Training for Adult Serving Youth (LEA staff) and/or parents
- [DBT in Schools training / Implementation](#)
- Early Warning System implementation or expansion
- Education about sexting and sextortion
- Elementary School Counseling needs
- Expansion of the [Botvin LifeSkills Training](#) program
- Gang prevention programs for elementary schools
- Good Behavior Game implementation
- [Hope Squads](#)
- [JED High School](#)
- Jr. Hope Squads
- Motivational Interviewing training
- [Parent Seminars](#) (e.g. speakers)
- Positive community norms messaging campaigns
- [PREPaRE WS1, Third Edition](#), Comprehensive School Safety Planning: Prevention Through Recovery Cost of materials
- [PREPaRE WS2, Third Edition](#), Mental Health Crisis Interventions: Responding to an Acute Traumatic Stressor in Schools Cost of materials

- Protective Factor Training and/or Implementation
- [Question, Persuade, Refer \(QPR\)](#)
- [Signs of Suicide](#)
- Skills-based programs (Life skills, emotional regulation skills, social skills)
- [Sources of Strength](#)
- Training or Implementation of [Accountability Practices](#)
- Trauma informed / sensitive schools initiatives or approaches
- [Trust-Based Relational Intervention \(TBRI\)](#)
- VitalCog (for athletes/coaches)
- Wellness Rooms (Calm Rooms)
- [Working Minds](#)
- [Youth Mental Health First Aid](#) Training (one day)
- Other evidence-informed or evidence-based training for staff related to Prevention Initiatives (please provide references)
- Other evidence-based programs (see the following registries):
 - [Evidence-Based Program Registries](#)

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM DIRECTORIES/ REGISTRIES

[Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development](#)

Identifies youth violence, delinquency, and drug prevention and intervention programs that meet a strict scientific standard of program effectiveness.

[Crime Solutions](#)

National Institute of Justice (NIJ)

A federal website that uses rigorous research to determine what works in criminal justice, juvenile justice, and crime victim services. Many programs listed address

behavioral health issues. This resource aims to assist in practical decision making and program implementation by gathering information on specific justice-related programs and reviewing the existing evaluation research against standard criteria.

[Evidence-Based Practices Resource Center](#)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

A searchable database of more than 330 interventions for the prevention and treatment of mental and substance use disorders. The database was developed to assist people, agencies, and organizations identify and implement evidence-based programs and practices in their communities.

[Model Programs Guide](#)

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

A searchable database of more than 200 evidence-based programs that address the entire continuum of youth services, from prevention through sanctions to reentry. Programs are categorized into exemplary, effective, and promising, based on a set of methodological criteria and strength of the findings.

[Suicide Prevention Resource Center Best Practices Registry](#)

Suicide Prevention Resource Center

A registry that has been reviewed by experts to ensure they align with the most current guidance on preventing suicide. Every listing has demonstrated effectiveness in preventing suicide or directly addresses the factors that impact suicide prevention.

[What Works Clearinghouse \(WWC\)](#)

Institute of Education Sciences (IES)

Presents findings of a systematic review process designed to identify scientific evidence of what works in education. Findings are presented to the public through a variety of products including practice guides, online reports and reviews, and a studies database.

PREVENTION STRATEGY SPOTLIGHTS

ATTENDANCE BEST PRACTICES

In Utah, Chronic Absenteeism is defined as a student missing more than 10% of the school year for any reason (excused or unexcused) after they have been enrolled for at least 60 days.

Attendance is a complicated behavior that needs to be addressed at the community, family, school, and student level. Because of the complexity, it is essential the schools systematically understand and implement instruction and intervention. A systematic approach helps promote understanding in what is and what is not working and provides sustainability. This in turn assists better progress and decreases frustration for all stakeholders.

School teams need to spend time learning about attendance at each Tier and have a written framework or plan to address it.

Prior to providing intervention, it is essential that schools understand the following:

- Their current data and investigation of its accuracy
- state policy, rule, and procedure
- LEA policy, rule, and procedure
- Community and cultural demographics
- Family and student perspective on attendance
- Family and student perspective on why absences may occur

RESOURCES FOR UNDERSTANDING, PLANNING, AND IMPLEMENTING:

- [Attendance Playbook](#): This was created by FutureEd and Attendance Works to guide SEA, LEA, and individual schools through promotion of attendance

and prevention of absenteeism—it consists of 86 pages of research-based practices

- [Utah Attendance as a Behavior](#): This is created to support understanding in Utah policy and rule around attendance
- [School Leaders Guide to Tackling Attendance](#)
- [Functional Behavior Assessment of Attendance](#)
- [Check and Connect for Prevention](#)
- [USBE Absenteeism and Truancy Prevention](#)

BULLYING PREVENTION BEST PRACTICES

Schools are ethically and legally responsible for implementing comprehensive, school-wide initiatives to promote a safe environment and prevent bullying.

UNDERSTANDING BULLYING

- Bullying is an intentional act (written, verbal, or physical) by a student or staff member that is repeated *or* a single egregious act involving an imbalance of power—it must create a hostile environment and interfere with educational/professional performance
 - *Exclusions*: It specifically does not include ordinary teasing, reasonable correction of behavior by staff, or reasonable coaching techniques
- The Core Components (**PRI**):
 - **Power Imbalance**: A difference in strength or influence
 - **Repetition**: Occurs over time (or is a single egregious act)
 - **Intent to Harm**: The action is intended to cause distress

PREVENTION

Due to the complexity of bullying, initiatives should be comprehensive and schoolwide:

- Focus on Climate & Assessment: Regularly assess bullying prevalence and school climate
- Clear Rules & Policies: Establish and enforce clear, communicated rules that define and prohibit bullying for students and staff
- Training & Support: Provide ongoing training for staff in prevention, identification, and consistent, appropriate response
- Increased Supervision: Increase adult supervision in common areas (halls, lunch, recess) where bullying often occurs
- Sustain Effort: Continue and integrate prevention efforts over time across all school operations

EDUCATOR'S ROLE

Adults must promptly intervene to stop, mitigate, and prevent harmful conduct. Failure to do so can be perceived by students as agreement or tolerance of the behavior. Consistent intervention also models positive behavior, influencing student conduct and peer relationships by setting a clear standard.

REQUIRED RESPONSE AND INVESTIGATION

Schools must follow requirements outlined in Utah Code Section [53G-9-605.5](#) and Board Rules [R277-613](#) when an incident is reported:

- Investigation: Conduct a timely and thorough investigation by trained personnel
 - Process: Interview the targeted student, alleged offender, and witnesses, gather all relevant evidence (including digital evidence), and maintain confidentiality as much as legally possible
 - Finding: Determine if the incident occurred and if it meets the definition of bullying
- Parent Notification:
 - Immediate: Inform parents of all students involved about the incident

- Suicidality: If suicidal ideation is a concern, provide parents with suicide prevention resources and information on limiting fatal means
- Post-Investigation: Inform parents of the outcome, findings, and appeal options, and provide the parents of the targeted student with information about safety measures and the action plan
- Action Plan for Verified Incidents:
 - Support for Targeted Student: Provide tailored support, safety measures (e.g., reduced interaction with the offender), and resources while ensuring the plan does not require the targeted student to change their schedule, placement, or activities
 - Consequences for Offender: Implement tailored consequences and supportive measures/resources to address the cause of the incident while generally maintaining the student's access to education
 - Legal: Report suspected criminal activity to law enforcement and ensure due process rights for the accused

RESOURCES

- [Local Education Agency \(LEA\) Bullying Model Policy](#)
- [LEA Bullying Policy Checklist](#)
- [Model Bullying Canvas Training](#)

SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION BEST PRACTICES

Substance use prevention in schools is most effective with a comprehensive, ongoing approach (rather than a one-time assembly or event) with a focus on **increasing protective factors** and **decreasing risk factors**. The following strategies have been shown to be effective in preventing youth substance use:

SKILL-BUILDING FOR STUDENTS

Programs should focus on providing opportunities for students to develop cognitive, emotional, and social skills such as study habits, self-control, emotional awareness, stress management, communication, social problem-solving, assertiveness, and drug-resistance skills.

EMPHASIS ON BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND SHORT-TERM CONSEQUENCES

Youth substance use impacts brain development, particularly in areas related to attention, impulse control, and mood regulation. Prevention messaging should highlight short-term consequences that resonate with students, such as decreased sports performance, academic decline, and increased risk of injury.

COMMUNICATE POSITIVE SOCIAL NORMS

Research shows a consistent gap between perception and reality: people tend to overestimate how many youth are using substances. When we correct these misperceptions by sharing accurate data, substance use rates tend to decline. Messaging should also focus on what students can do to thrive, rather than solely on what to avoid.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND POSITIVE BEHAVIOR PLANS

A supportive school culture is foundational. Schools should implement Positive Behavior Plans that address peer pressure, mental health, and meaningful relationships. These plans must be developed with input from students, parents, and staff.

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS

Review evidence-based directories and registries and use programs with proven effectiveness. These programs should be selected based on local needs and implemented with fidelity. All schools should be implementing the Botvin LifeSkills Training program in grades 4 or 5, 7, or 8, and 9 or 10, in accordance with state law. ([Utah Code Section 53G-10-406](#), [Board Rules R277-910](#))

YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES

Providing students with opportunities to engage in prevention efforts fosters ownership and relevance. Youth-led initiatives, such as peer education, student-led campaigns, and involvement in planning school-wide prevention activities, can enhance engagement and reinforce positive norms.

COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES AND LOCAL PREVENTION COORDINATORS

Prevention efforts are most effective when schools collaborate with families and community partners. Collaborating with the community on Parent Seminars and other prevention strategies can support both community and family engagement.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Substance Use Prevention](#)

SUICIDE PREVENTION

THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT SUICIDE IS TO USE A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH THAT INCLUDES THESE KEY COMPONENTS:

- Promote emotional well-being and connectedness among all students
- Identify students who may be at risk for suicide and assist them in getting help
- Be prepared to respond when a suicide death occurs

[Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Resources for Students and School Staff](#)

Research your options with the [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#) to find a program that works best with your school.

[Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention](#)

[School-Based Programming for Suicide Prevention](#): Using a Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) approach, schools can implement universal programming for all

students and families, selective interventions for students with some risk, and individualized interventions for students with high risk.

WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO:

Schools can improve their suicide prevention by familiarizing themselves with legislation requiring suicide prevention, ensuring their school has a comprehensive suicide prevention policy in place, requiring suicide prevention training for staff, providing mental health presentations for parents and students, and even assigning a suicide prevention expert at their school. The goal of training within schools for teachers and staff is to help them identify students at risk for suicide and provide them with the knowledge of actionable steps to take once students have been identified.

WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO AFTER A SUICIDE:

In addition to creating a comprehensive suicide prevention plan, it is important to have a plan in place to respond if a suicide occurs in your community. The death of a student by suicide inevitably leaves a school faced with grieving students, distressed parents and school staff, and a community struggling to understand how it happened. Schools need to be prepared with information, tools, and guidance to protect and communicate with their students and families. The Utah State Board of Education created the [Healing Our Schools After A Loss: A Toolkit for Schools Responding to a Suicide or Sudden Death](#) to assist schools in implementing a coordinated response to the death of a student, staff, or community member.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Suicide Prevention for Parents and Caregivers](#)
- [Grief Support Resource Guide](#)

APPLICATION SUPPORT

PREVENTION BLOCK GRANT APPLICATION SCORING RUBRIC

SCORING LEVELS:

0. Insufficient Evidence
1. Needs Improvement
2. Sufficient
3. Exemplary

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

A. Comprehensive Prevention Plan: Stakeholder Input

(Weight: 5)

0. The plan provides no evidence of stakeholder input.
1. The plan includes limited evidence of stakeholder input.
Identifies stakeholders but does not provide notes on their contributions.
Lacks information on how stakeholder input was solicited.
2. The plan demonstrates adequate stakeholder input.
Lists stakeholders and summarizes their input.
Outlines methods used to gather input.
3. The plan provides good evidence of comprehensive stakeholder input.
Includes a wide range of stakeholders and outlines their input.
Outlines effective methods for soliciting input and demonstrates how it informed the plan.

B. Comprehensive Prevention Plan: Goals, Strategies, and Resources

(Weight: 10)

0. The plan lacks clear and specific goals related to prevention.
Strategies are not mentioned.
No resources are listed, or they do not support the strategies outlined.
1. The goals are vague and not fully developed.
Strategies are mentioned but are irrelevant to the goals.
Resources are listed but do not fully align with the strategies or goals.
2. The goals are clear and somewhat specific to the prevention needs.
Strategies are relevant and include some details on implementation.
Resources are appropriate and support the strategies to some extent.
3. The goals are well-defined and specific, and they directly address the prevention needs.
Strategies are comprehensive and/or robust, with clear steps for implementation.
Resources are well-matched with the strategies and contribute to achieving the goals.

C. Comprehensive Prevention Plan: Plan for implementing the positive behaviors plan

(Weight: 3)

0. A plan for implementing positive behaviors plans is not provided.
1. A plan for implementing positive behaviors plans is vague or unclear.
2. A plan for implementing positive behavior plans is provided.
3. A clear and detailed plan for implementing positive behavior plans is provided.

D. Comprehensive Prevention Plan: Plan for implementing suicide prevention programs

(Weight: 3)

0. A plan for implementing suicide prevention programs is not provided.
1. A plan for implementing suicide prevention programs is vague or unclear.
2. A plan for implementing suicide prevention programs is provided.

3. A clear and detailed plan for implementing suicide prevention programs is provided.

E. Comprehensive Prevention Plan: Plan for ensuring school personnel receive information on childhood trauma

(Weight: 3)

0. A plan for ensuring school personnel receive information on childhood trauma is not provided.
1. A plan for ensuring school personnel receive information on childhood trauma is vague or unclear.
2. A plan for ensuring school personnel receive information on childhood trauma is provided.
3. A clear and detailed plan for ensuring school personnel receive information on childhood trauma is provided.

F. How will outcomes be measured and evaluated for effectiveness?

(Weight: 7)

0. The application does not define the outcomes to be measured.
1. The application defines outcomes but lacks specificity.
The plan for data collection and analysis is outlined but does not use methods that measure effectiveness.
2. The application provides a clear definition of measurable outcomes.
The plan for data collection and analysis is outlined and measures effectiveness.
3. The application clearly defines specific, measurable outcomes with indicators.
The plan for data collection and analysis has multiple methods to measure effectiveness and is well-developed and thorough.
Outlines how findings will be used for program improvement.

G. Data (qualitative and quantitative) that demonstrates the LEA's need

(Weight: 7)

0. The data provided is irrelevant or does not demonstrate the LEA's prevention needs.

1. The data provided demonstrates some aspects of the LEA's prevention needs but is incomplete.

2. The data provided adequately demonstrates the LEA's prevention needs.

The rationale for the prevention plan is supported by relevant data.

3. The data provided is comprehensive and clearly demonstrates the LEA's prevention needs.

The rationale for the prevention plan is well-supported by both qualitative and quantitative data.