



Prevention Newsletter

February 2026

This newsletter is intended for educators and other stakeholders who have a role in providing school-based prevention activities. Any information contained is to provide updates to the field on prevention matters. This newsletter should not be forwarded.



Utah State
Board of
Education

Prevention

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) Prevention Team upholds the Board's Mission to open doors of opportunity for all students by working to identify and decrease risk factors, increase protective factors, and provide students with access to resources in a safe environment that will help them thrive. In collaboration with families, educators, and communities, the USBE Prevention Team aims to foster students' well-being and success across all stages of life.

Message from the Prevention Coordinator



Building Strong Connections:
The Heart of School Based Prevention

Happy February!

February brings Valentine's Day and Friendship Day and a month filled with reminders about kindness, appreciation, and the importance of relationships. Beyond the cards and celebrations, this season highlights a central truth in prevention work: **strong, supportive relationships are one of the most powerful protective factors we can offer students.**

Research on Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) shows that connectedness to caring adults, peers, and community significantly strengthens long term mental health and resilience. A [landmark 2019 study](#) showed that children who report higher levels of positive experiences have dramatically lower rates of mental health concerns in adulthood and greater emotional support, even when they have also experienced adversity. Additional PCE research* demonstrates **a clear dose response relationship: the more positive experiences a child has, the better their long term emotional and relational health outcomes tend to be.** Schools play a uniquely powerful role in creating many of these experiences.

But this work is not just important for students; **it also matters deeply for staff.** Strong connections between colleagues are critical for educator well being, morale, and resilience. **Prevention work is most sustainable when the adults in the building feel supported, valued, and connected to one another.** When staff have trusted colleagues they can turn to, they experience lower stress, greater job satisfaction, and improved emotional health. Small, positive interactions throughout the day with colleagues can strengthen the fabric of the school community, just as they do with students. Examples such as expressing gratitude, checking in, offering help, sharing a laugh, or noticing when someone seems overwhelmed are a few of the ways that we can build these connections.

Healthy staff relationships also model the very PCE aligned environments we seek to create for students. **When students observe adults collaborating, caring for one another, and practicing kindness, they see connection in action, and that modeling becomes part of the school culture.**

In school based prevention, we often talk about programs, data, and interventions, **but at the heart of all effective prevention is connection.** Simple, consistent actions make a difference: greeting students by name, noticing changes in mood, remembering and asking about their interests, and creating classroom spaces where students know they matter. These interactions

foster trust, and trust opens the door for **learning, help seeking, and resilience.**

This February, as we celebrate friendship and kindness, it is a perfect moment to reflect on how our everyday interactions, both with students and with each other, help create positive experiences. Every connection strengthens belonging and safety, for both young people and adults.

Heartfelt connections aren't just a theme for February. They are the heartbeat of prevention, the foundation of lifelong resilience, and the anchor of a thriving school community. **Simple actions make a big difference. Every connection is a protective factor. Every relationship is prevention.**

Warm regards,

Tanya Albornoz
USBE Prevention Coordinator

*Please reach out to prevention@schools.utah.gov with questions or for help, including a list of current research that supports this article.



Protective Factor Feature

The **Protective Factor Framework** is a research-based approach that strengthens and improves child and family well-being by reducing risks and promoting positive outcomes, even amid adversity. It guides education staff to focus on five key attributes that help reduce student risk, enhance well-being, and support student success. One Protective Factor will be highlighted each month. This month's focus is on **Cognitive, Emotional, and Social**

Competence.

Introduction: Understanding Cognitive, Emotional, and Social Competence

Cognitive, Emotional, and Social Competence actually includes three concepts in one. **Cognitive competence** refers to the thinking skills students use to learn and solve problems. These skills include attention, memory, planning, reasoning, and flexible thinking. They are the skills students rely on for reading, writing, problem solving, and organizing their work. These are the skills that we typically think of as the “business” of schools. **Emotional** competence involves understanding emotions, managing feelings, and responding to stress in healthy ways. **Social** competence includes empathy, communication, cooperation, and the ability to build and maintain positive relationships with peers and adults. Together, these three competencies help students engage in learning, navigate challenges, and persist when work becomes difficult. Students need all three competencies to achieve their highest academic potential.

A multitude of studies* from school-based prevention work, developmental science, and neuroscience show that **learning is not only an intellectual process**. Rather, learning is deeply connected to how **safe, calm, and connected** students feel in their bodies and relationships. Neuroscience helps explain why these skills are so closely linked. The brain systems responsible for emotion and survival respond first when a student feels stressed, threatened, or overwhelmed. When the emotional or limbic system is activated, the brain shifts into a protective state. In this state, **students have limited access** to the areas of the brain responsible for reasoning, memory, and problem solving. **This is why it is necessary for students to be regulated and for their emotional or limbic system to be calm in order for them to be able to learn.** A calm and regulated nervous system allows students to access higher level thinking and fully participate in instruction.

Students thrive when they have opportunities to practice self-regulation, decision making, communication, and empathy in safe, supportive environments. School-based prevention research shows that when schools intentionally build these skills through daily interactions, classroom practices, and positive relationships, **students experience improved academic outcomes, stronger connections, and fewer behavior challenges.**

Adults play a critical role in this process. Students are best able to develop

Cognitive, Emotional, and Social Competence when they interact with adults who model calm behavior, provide warmth and consistency, and set clear and fair expectations. Supportive relationships help students feel safe, which supports regulation and learning. When schools prioritize **connection, predictability, and skill building alongside academic instruction, they create conditions where students can thrive both academically and emotionally.**

In addition, these competencies begin developing in the home. Since parents and caregivers have a strong impact on their children through teaching and modeling, they should be included in efforts that support development of these skills. Schools play a critical role in reinforcing Cognitive, emotional, and social competencies by providing structured opportunities for students to practice, demonstrate, and grow these skills further.

Building Cognitive, Emotional, and Social competence is not an extra task added to the school day. **It is a foundation for learning.** By supporting regulation, relationships, and skill development together, schools strengthen students' ability to learn, grow, and succeed in school and beyond.

In March, we will continue to focus on **Cognitive, Emotional, and Social Competence** and share practical, hands-on approaches that educators can use to strengthen these skills in students.

*Please contact prevention@schools.utah.gov if interested in the research that supports this article.



Prevention Updates & Information

New Parent Education Video on Safe Technology Use Now Available

During the 2025 Legislative Session, the Utah State Legislature passed [Senate Bill \(S.B.\) 98: Parental Education on Student Use of Technology Amendments](#), a bill aimed at increasing awareness among parents about the safety and legal risks students may face when using technology. In response to this legislation, the USBE has partnered with Bonneville Communications to produce a brief, informative video presentation designed specifically for parents and guardians.

The video addresses critical issues such as the risks of sharing personal data through social media and other digital platforms, as well as the serious consequences of creating or sharing sexual or nude images - including those that are artificially generated. These topics are increasingly relevant in today's digital landscape, and the video provides clear, accessible guidance to help families navigate these challenges with awareness and care.

USBE has made this video available to all school districts across Utah, with the goal of ensuring that every parent has the opportunity to view and discuss these important topics. We encourage districts, schools, and community organizations to share the video widely and incorporate it into parent engagement efforts.

You can view the video and access additional information by visiting the [USBE Safe Use of Technology webpage](#). Together, we can empower families with the knowledge they need to support safe and responsible technology use among students.

New Prevention Overview Video

The USBE Prevention Team invites school personnel to deepen their foundational prevention knowledge by viewing our new [35-minute Prevention Overview video](#). This resource provides essential background for those planning to attend the Comprehensive Prevention Plan Workshops in March, and is

equally valuable for anyone seeking a clearer understanding of effective, evidence based prevention practices.

To learn more about the upcoming workshops, including dates, locations, and registration details, please see the **Professional Learning** section of this newsletter.

Building a Circle of Safety: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

February is often associated with relationships and connection. Within school communities, this time offers a vital opportunity for conversations about the most important relationship a child can have: a safe and trusting connection with the adults in their lives. In the same way that fire drills are used to prepare for physical emergencies, prevention education, including child sexual abuse and human trafficking awareness, is an essential part of student safety and preparedness. While these topics can seem heavy, prevention is empowering. Research ⁽¹⁾ ⁽²⁾ ⁽³⁾ ⁽⁴⁾ shows that the most effective way to protect students is not through fear, but by educating them on healthy boundaries, recognizing red flags, and establishing a culture where speaking up is safe. Age-appropriate education does not steal a child's innocence, it arms them with the vocabulary and confidence to protect it. Schools provide a safe, neutral environment to reinforce the safety messages being taught at home.

Prevention education teaches students about the reality of grooming. Offenders rarely jump out from behind bushes, rather, they often use fake trustworthiness to manipulate children. They may offer gifts, special attention, or a listening ear to lower a child's defenses and isolate them from their parents and other support systems. By teaching students to recognize these grooming tactics, we give them the skills they need to stay safe. A child who knows that safe adults do not ask kids to keep secrets is much harder to victimize.

Children cannot be supervised every moment of every day, which is why teaching them protective factors is our most enduring safety strategy. When we teach students refusal skills, emotional resilience, and a solid connection to their trusted adults, we are doing more than just warning them about danger, we are building their immunity against it. These protective factors act as an internal shield. If a child encounters grooming or exploitation, they can have the confidence to recognize the red flags and make sure that their voice will be

heard. By prioritizing these strengths in our classrooms, we move beyond simple awareness to true, lasting empowerment.

For more information on child sexual abuse and human trafficking prevention education for elementary students as well as available funding, please reach out to [Mindy Elliott](mailto:mindy.elliott@schools.utah.gov) (mindy.elliott@schools.utah.gov), Prevention Specialist.

(1) [Understanding clinical fear and anxiety through the lens of human fear conditioning](#)

nature reviews psychology

(2) [Effectiveness of child sexual abuse prevention programs on knowledge acquisition: A meta-analytical study](#)

(3) [Child Sexual Abuse Prevention: Parental Discussion, Protective Practices and Attitudes](#)

(4) [Prevention of child sexual abuse victimization: a meta-analysis of school programs](#)

National Library of Medicine

USBE Announces New Statewide Contract for the Student Intervention Early Warning System

WHAT: USBE is pleased to announce a new statewide contract with Panorama Education for the Student Intervention Early Warning System (EWS).

BACKGROUND: [Utah Code Section 53F 4 207](#) requires each Local Education Agency (LEA) to implement a digital Student Intervention EWS in every school. LEAs need to have a plan for compliance with the EWS requirement by the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year. To support this mandate and ensure compliance with state law, USBE has established a statewide contract with Panorama Education.

The contract will support any LEA in Utah that chooses to participate. LEAs that choose to utilize this contract may do so at a discounted rate: USBE will fund 50% of the cost, and participating LEAs will be responsible for the remaining 50%.

The Panorama Student Success platform integrates all legally required criteria:

- Core Metrics: Academics (Course Failures), Attendance, and Behavior/Discipline (including school safety violations).
- Intervention: Specifically tracks intervention plans for tiered interventions.

- Customization: Optional modules are available for additional local board-determined criteria.
- Pricing: The state covers half (50% subsidy) of the annual cost for participating LEAs. \$3,500 (Standard) or \$4,000 (with optional student survey module).

Please note: LEAs that prefer NOT to use Panorama may select a different early warning system platform, provided it meets all statutory requirements outlined in [Utah Code Section 53F 4 207](#).

USBE is providing an informational webinar in conjunction with Panorama for LEAs to learn more. Registration information is included below.

Also, USBE will be monitoring LEA compliance with the EWS requirement via the CACTUS/USIMS database. In order to gather baseline data to assist with monitoring, we are requesting that LEAs complete a 5-minute survey (link included below).

WHO: Superintendents, charter directors, and/or designated LEA representatives who oversee EWS implementation.

WHEN: February 18, 2026 | 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

EWS Informational Webinar will include:

- An overview of the EWS requirements
- Information regarding monitoring
- An introduction to Panorama Education
- Information on how LEAs can enroll

WHERE: Virtual Zoom meeting

ACTIONS:

- Inform Stakeholders: Share EWS requirements with your local boards and LEA leadership.
- Decide Your Path: Determine if you will use the state-contracted Panorama platform or an alternative vendor/process that meets the criteria specified in [Utah Code Section 53F 4 207](#).
- Designate a Point of Contact: Appoint contact person for your LEA and submit their information via the Qualtrics Survey (see link below).
- Have the designated contact and other interested parties [register for the informational webinar](#) (Zoom meeting link will be sent after registration).

- Complete the [Early Warning System Baseline Qualtrics Survey](#) by February 15, 2026.
- Watch for Follow-up: USBE will be sending out additional information to the designated LEA contacts.

INFORMATION: Visit USBE's [Early Warning System webpage](#) for more information.

CONTACTS:

USBE:

- [Tanya Alborno](#) or [Cuong Nguyen](#) for general questions regarding the EWS, EWS vendor feedback, implementation, interventions, or EWS integration with tiered supports.
- [Aaron Brough](#) for data and SIS integration questions, funding, and tracking of LEA participation information.

Panorama:

- [Cait Potts](#) (cpotts@panoramaed.com), *Utah Outreach Partner*
- [Kaylee Dunn](#) (kdunn@panoramaed.com), *Regional Sales Director, Utah*
- [Nicole DellaRocco](#) (ndellarocco@panoramaed.com), *Team Lead, Account Management*



Prevention Funding

Child Sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking Prevention (CSA/HT) Alternative Provider Choice Grant

USBE is pleased to announce that the application deadline for the CSA/HT Alternative Provider Choice Grant has been extended to **March 1, 2026**.

This grant is intended **only** to support CSA/HT prevention training for **elementary students**. Trainings for parents/guardians and adults serving youth are not eligible for these funds.

Prevent Child Abuse Utah (PCAU) is the state's preferred provider and is contracted to deliver CSA/HT prevention instruction to elementary students free of charge to local education agencies (LEAs). Therefore, grant funds are not intended to support PCAU-employed trainers delivering classroom presentations to elementary students.

Awarded funds may be used for the following:

- Instructional materials for students in grades K-6.
- Paying stipends for educators to become trainers or to provide approved instructional materials to students.
- Paying an organization to provide approved materials to students.
- Costs for printing or other materials needed to provide the instruction.
- Travel costs for staff providing instruction to students.
- Costs for online training materials (if approved by USBE).

Awarded funds may **NOT** be used for the following:

- Food or other incentives for student participation.
- Assemblies.
- Computer equipment.
- Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions to provide the instruction or benefits for an FTE.

Interested LEAs can apply for this grant in the Utah Grants Management System.

If you have questions regarding the program, instructional material approval, or the grant process, please contact [Mindy Elliott](mailto:mindy.elliott@schools.utah.gov) (mindy.elliott@schools.utah.gov), *Prevention Specialist*, or [Tina Morandy](mailto:tina.morandy@schools.utah.gov) (tina.morandy@schools.utah.gov), *Executive Secretary*.



Prevention Stars



Jennifer Stone

We are pleased to recognize **Jennifer Stone** as the Prevention Star for February 2026. Jennifer has been a Licensed Clinical Social Worker for more than ten years in the Granite School District, and she is currently working at Lincoln Elementary. Jennifer was nominated by Britta Watts, Health Educator at the Salt Lake County Health Department. Britta wrote:

"In addition to her tasks as the social worker at her school, she has also begun working as the site coordinator for Project CREST, a collaboration with USU Extension and the Health Department, to increase prevention at Lincoln. This

has allowed prevention education and family engagement at Lincoln.” Jennifer has been able to leverage community resources and connections as well as her exemplary skills to do her excellent work. Congratulations, Jennifer! We are grateful for all you do for Utah’s students!

Nominate a Prevention Star

The USBE Prevention Team would like to celebrate with you! We would like to recognize successful prevention work happening across the state that has demonstrated promising outcomes for students. Please submit any success stories, excellent practices, or examples of exemplary prevention work that is happening in your LEA (school district or charter school). We will be including these in future newsletters so we can share your work with your colleagues statewide. We may also be including them in statewide prevention webinars as well as other professional learning opportunities.

Feel free to nominate a school district, charter school, program, school, or an individual. We may follow up with you if we need more information. We look forward to receiving your nominations.

Please fill out this [Qualtrics form to nominate a Prevention Star](#).



Prevention Team Spotlight



Utah School Safety Center, pictured from left to right. Top Row: Scott Eyre, Rhett Larsen, Jeremy Barnes, Levi Grisenti. Bottom Row: Shauntelle Cota, Ashley Pistello, Michelle Knight, Marie Steffensen, and Melissa Muhlestein. Not pictured: Willie Chen.

This month we would like to put the spotlight on the **Utah School Safety Center**.

In the spring of 2019, the Utah State Legislature passed [House Bill \(H.B.\) 120: Student and School Safety Assessment](#), establishing the Utah School Safety Center (SSC). The SSC is a collaborative partnership between the USBE, the Utah Department of Public Safety (DPS), and the Utah Office of Substance Use and Mental Health (OSUMH).

Through this collaboration, the Utah SSC provides technical assistance, training, and practical resources to support Local Education Agencies in strengthening school safety, improving preparedness, and enhancing the overall climate of school communities. The SSC is committed to ensuring students learn in safe and supportive school settings.

The Utah SSC is led by **Shauntelle Cota**, Director of School Safety and Student Services, and **Rhett Larsen**, School Safety Center Coordinator. Members include: USBE School Safety Specialists **Ashley Pistello** and **Levi Grisenti**; Lieutenant **Jeremy Barnes**, liaison with DPS; **Scott Eyre**, School-based Mental Health Specialist with OSUMH; **Marie Steffensen**, Executive Director of the State Charter School Board; **Willie Chen**, USBE School Safety Data Specialist; and **Melissa Muhlestein**, Executive Secretary. The USBE Prevention team has a Prevention Specialist, **Michelle Knight**, that also serves as a liaison on the SSC in

order to ensure that prevention efforts are represented and considered in these critical services for schools.

Visit the [Utah School Safety Center Contacts webpage](#) to learn more about the team.



Professional Learning

The USBE Prevention Team offers many professional learning opportunities. You can find the details in the Professional Learning sidebar menu on the [Prevention webpage](#).

For customized professional learning or training requests please use the [Student Services TRP](#).

Remember to put the following dates on your calendars.

Comprehensive Prevention Plan Workshops

WHAT: The Prevention Block Grant application is scheduled to open in Fall 2026, and a comprehensive prevention plan will be a required component of the application. To support LEAs in preparing for this opportunity, we invite you to join an interactive workshop designed to help teams develop and implement a prevention plan tailored to their school communities.

During the workshop, participants will:

- Explore evidence-based strategies for prevention
- Receive guidance on aligning efforts with state prevention requirements
- Engage in collaborative planning exercises

While this workshop is especially valuable for LEAs intending to apply for grant funding, all LEA teams are welcome. Attendees will leave with tools and insights to strengthen prevention efforts and improve student outcomes-regardless of funding intent.

Please note: Our team is deeply invested in ensuring that every school and LEA, large or small, rural or urban, has access to meaningful support in building an effective prevention plan. We want to continue offering opportunities like this, and **strong participation helps make that possible**. Right now, registration numbers are low. If your team is involved in prevention work in any capacity, we strongly encourage you to register and attend. **Your participation will strengthen your prevention efforts, and helps sustain statewide support and resources for years to come.**

WHO: LEA teams that will be implementing a comprehensive prevention plan.

WHEN: All workshops will be held in March 2026 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at the locations shown below.

WHERE:

- Friday, March 6, 2026 | Spanish Fork
- Tuesday, March 10, 2026 | Ogden
- Tuesday, March 11, 2026 | Price
- Tuesday, March 17, 2026 | Cedar City
- Wednesday, March 18, 2026 | Salt Lake City

ACTION: [Register via MIDAS Course ID 65696](#)

INFORMATION: For additional information, please contact prevention@schools.utah.gov.

Protective Factors Professional Learning Opportunity

WHAT: The USBE Prevention Team is excited to offer an in-depth, in-person professional learning opportunity on the Protective Factors Framework for

LEAs during the 2025–2026 school year. This one-day, six-hour training course built on the foundation introduced during the April 2025 Prevention Workshops. It provides a deep-dive into the Protective Factors Framework—a research-based, evidence-informed approach proven to strengthen child and family well-being and reduce the risk of unhealthy behaviors in students. The training will be held at multiple locations across the state, and participants will earn 5.5 USBE license renewal hours upon completion.

WHO: School administrators, prevention staff, counselors, social workers, school-based mental health staff, behavior specialists, teachers. Anyone will benefit from the information shared.

WHEN/WHERE: Dates and locations are listed below:

- Tuesday, March 10, 2026 | 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Carbon School District
Training Room 1
251 West 400 North
Price, UT 84501
- Monday, March 16, 2026 | 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Heritage Center Theater and Festival Hall
105 North 100 East
Cedar City, UT 84720

ACTION: [Register for the Protective Factors opportunities via MIDAS Course ID 65849.](#)

INFORMATION: Visit the [Prevention Professional Learning webpage.](#)

2025-2026 Prevention and Student Services Webinar Series

January's webinar took place on Thursday, January 15 and explored current trends in youth substance use and best practices for prevention. This session covered relevant state laws, introduced effective prevention strategies within the Protective Factor Framework, and highlighted key resources available to support substance use prevention efforts in schools.

February's webinar is designed to provide foundational knowledge to support student mental health in school settings. Participants will learn about the mental

health continuum, common disorders (neurological, attachment, and mood), and practical approaches for fostering supportive relationships. The webinar emphasizes creating inclusive environments that promote well-being and academic success.

March's webinar will cover how schools can enhance cybersecurity using the 5 Protective Factors Framework. This session will explore how to build both technical and relational systems that promote digital safety, resilience, and shared responsibility across educational communities.

As always, you can find recordings and materials from past webinars on the [USB E Prevention Professional Learning webpage](#).

WHO: School administrators, prevention staff, behavior specialists, school counselors, social workers, teachers, school mentors, and other staff who work directly with students and have an interest in prevention topics.

WHEN: Please see the list below for more information about future webinars.

- **February:**

Thursday, February 19, 2026 | 12:00 p.m.

Understanding and Supporting Student Mental Health

- **March:**

Thursday, March 19, 2026 | 12:00 p.m.

Cybersecurity Gap Analysis & Best Practices

- **April:**

Thursday, April 16, 2026 | 12:00 p.m.

Child Sexual Abuse & Human Trafficking Prevention

- **May:**

Thursday, May 21, 2026 | 12:00 p.m.

Check & Connect Mentoring / Attendance

WHERE: Online on Zoom.

ACTION: [Register for the combined webinars via Zoom](#)

INFORMATION: Reach out to prevention@schools.utah.gov or visit the [USB E Prevention Professional Learning webpage](#) for more information, including recordings and materials from past webinars.

The Power of Connection: Enhancing Positive Childhood Experiences through Social Connections

WHAT: The USBE Prevention Team is partnering with the Utah Prevention Coalition Association (UPCA) to hold a one-day in-person pre-conference workshop in conjunction with the annual UPCA Summit at Bryce Canyon. This collaborative workshop will focus on actionable strategies to strengthen Positive Childhood Experiences through social connection-an approach that supports healthier, safer communities and helps young people thrive in school and beyond. Registration and cost details are coming soon.

WHEN: Tuesday, June 9, 2025 | 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (One day prior to the annual UPCA Summit held June 10-12, 2026.)

WHERE: Best Western Plus-Ruby's Inn
26 South Main St
Bryce Canyon City, UT 84764

WHO: School and District Personnel, Community Coalition Members, Community Prevention Coordinators

For more information, please contact [Clarissa Stebbing](mailto:clarissa.stebbing@schools.utah.gov) (clarissa.stebbing@schools.utah.gov).

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) Trainings

WHAT: USBE will be hosting multiple YMHFA trainings throughout 2025 and 2026. 7.5 USBE license renewal hours are available to those who attend and complete this training. This training establishes a foundational understanding of mental health. It is important to note that school-based mental health specialists may possess advanced training that extends beyond the scope of this particular program.

WHO: School personnel supporting students from ages 12-18.

WHEN: Wednesday, April 15, 2026 | 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

WHERE: Virtually via Zoom

ACTION: [Register for YMHFA trainings via MIDAS Course ID 65691](#)

February Board Meeting

Summary of Highlights

The Utah State Board of Education:



- Approved a resolution commemorating America's 250th birthday.
- Renewed a waiver for Daggett County School District authorizing a four-day school week.
- Supported several pieces of proposed legislation for the 2026 General Legislative Session.

The Utah State Board of Education approved, amended, or repealed the following administrative rules:

- [R277-479, Funding for Charter School Students with Disabilities on an IEP.](#) This rule is being amended to address inflated SPED Add-On Weighted Pupil Unit funding levels for charter schools that have previously expanded.
- [R277-700, The Elementary and Secondary School General Core.](#) This rule is being amended to update requirements and timeline for the new civics course as required by [House Bill \(H.B.\) 381 Civics Education Amendments \(2025\)](#). These changes will allow districts and charter schools to begin offering the new course starting in the 2027-2028 school year.
- [R277-717, High School Course Grading Requirements.](#) This rule is being amended to provide clarity on the language concerning grade replacement, particularly about whether students must repeat an entire course or may repeat only the term(s) in which a low grade was earned,

and what qualifies as a “comparable course” to ensure consistent interpretation and implementation across districts and charter schools.

- [R277-929, State Council on Military Children](#). This rule is being amended based on feedback from schools implementing the Purple Star Program. The amendment clarifies the rule requirements on training for Purple Star Schools to reflect that staff training should be conducted annually.

See the [full agenda](#) or visit the [USBE website](#) for more information.

The Utah State Board of Education takes position on several proposed education bills:

The Board took a position of support for several proposed pieces of education-related legislation, including: H.B. 64, Schools and Institutional Trust Lands Amendments; H.B. 75, American Indian and Alaska Native Education Amendments; H.B. 463, Special Education Funding Amendments; H.B. 144, 2nd Substitute, School Community Council Amendments; H.B. 146, Mentoring and Supporting Teacher Excellence and Refinement Program Amendments; S.B. 34, 2nd Substitute, Public Education Revisions; and H.B. 448, Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind Amendments.

Additionally, the Board voted to support the inclusion of USBE in H.B. 36, Gold Medal Schools Pilot Program, to oversee the federal rural health grant.

For additional information, please contact: [Elisse Newey](#)
(elisse.newey@schools.utah.gov), *Deputy Superintendent of Policy*
Phone: (801) 538-7550

USBE Prevention Leaders



Tanya Albornoz is the Prevention Coordinator at USBE. In this role she oversees the implementation of prevention programs such as suicide prevention, substance use prevention, gang prevention, bullying prevention, child sexual abuse and human trafficking prevention, trauma-informed practices in education, and more.

tanya.albornoz@schools.utah.gov
(801) 538-7812



Prevention Team, pictured from left to right: Clarissa Stebbing, Michelle Knight, Cuong Nguyen, Tanya Albornoz, Tina Morandy, and Mindy Elliott.



Utah State
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Contact Us

[Meet the Prevention Team](#)

To contact the Prevention Team, email prevention@schools.utah.gov.

**250 East 500 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84114**

Subscribe to join the [School-based Prevention Services Listserv](#) using the Utah Education Network (UEN) Mailing List.

Subscribe to join our [Suicide Prevention Listserv](#) using the UEN Mailing List.

USBE Prevention Website



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