



Prevention Newsletter

September 2025

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

In collaboration with families, educators, and communities, the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) Prevention Team works 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. This collective effort aims to foster student well-being and success across all stages of life.

Message from the Prevention Coordinator

A Big Thank You!

We are grateful for the overwhelming response and for all who attended our first Prevention and Student Services webinar of the new school year. The session featured an in-depth discussion on **school-based mental health**, covering key topics such as:

- What qualifies as “restricted services”
- New requirements around **parental rights and consent**
- Rules governing **confidentiality**
- And more

A special thank you to Terrakay Bodily and Bethany Marker from the **USBE Student Services team** for joining us and sharing their expertise on these timely and important issues.

If you missed the session, you can catch up by watching the recording on the [USBE Prevention YouTube Channel](#). The **slide deck and related materials** are also available on the [USBE Prevention Professional Learning webpage](#). We encourage you to share these resources with colleagues who may find them helpful.

September Webinar: Suicide Prevention Month

In recognition of **Suicide Prevention Month**, our September webinar will spotlight the excellent suicide prevention efforts at **North Layton Junior High**. The webinar will be held on September 18, 2025 at noon. We really hope you will join us. Please find the link below for registration.

October Webinar Update

Please note: The October webinar was unintentionally scheduled during **fall break**. To honor your time off, we have decided to **cancel the October session**. Enjoy your break, and we look forward to seeing you again in **November**!

New Resource: School-Based Mental Health Technical Assistance Document

We're excited to announce the release of the new [School-based Mental Health Staff Roles and Responsibilities in the Education Setting](#) technical assistance document. This comprehensive guide outlines:

- Roles and responsibilities of school-based mental health staff
- Training, qualifications, and scopes of practice for **school counselors**, **school social workers**, and **school psychologists**
- Strategies for effective **multidisciplinary teaming** to support student behavioral and mental health needs

This is a **living document** that will be updated as changes occur in **Board Rules** and **Utah Statute**. It has been in development for several years, and we hope it becomes a valuable resource in your work.

Thank you for all you do to support students across Utah. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. We are here to support you and are honored to partner with you in this vital work.

Warm regards,

Tanya Albornoz
USBE Prevention Coordinator

Please reach out to prevention@schools.utah.gov with questions or for help.

Protective Factor Feature

The **Protective Factor Framework** is a research-based approach that improves child and family well-being by reducing risks and promoting positive outcomes, even amid adversity. In education, it guides staff to focus on five key attributes that help reduce student risk and enhance well-being. Each month, one Protective Factor will be highlighted—this month's focus is on **Concrete Supports**.

The term “**Concrete Supports**” refers to the **tangible, foundational resources** that provide stability for students and families. Just as concrete forms the base of a strong building, these supports create the conditions necessary for learning and development. For educators, this means helping students have access to basic needs such as **food, safe housing, transportation, and healthcare**—all of which directly impact a child's ability to engage in school.

When students lack access to these essentials, their focus shifts from academics to survival. They may spend time worrying or trying to meet unmet needs, which can hinder learning. This is why programs like school **breakfast and lunch** are so critical. Other examples of concrete supports in schools include:

- **Teen resource centers**
- **School-based health clinics**
- **Partnerships with food banks**
- **Access to clothing and hygiene items for families**

But concrete supports go beyond meeting basic needs. They also include **empowering students and families with the skills to advocate for themselves**. This includes knowing how to access services, understanding their rights, and communicating their needs. These supports are called “concrete” because they are **real, actionable, and measurable**, and they have a **direct impact on well-being and educational outcomes**.

Educators play a key role in this effort. By **teaching self-advocacy skills** and creating a classroom culture that **normalizes asking for help**, schools can foster resilience and independence in students.

For more information on the protective factor framework, please visit the [USBE Prevention webpage](#).



Prevention Updates

New Resource: Local Education Agency (LEA) Communications Toolkit Now Available

We are excited to announce the release of our [LEA Communications Toolkit: For Emergencies & Key Events](#)—a ready-to-use resource designed to support LEAs in responding quickly and effectively during emergencies or other urgent situations.

This toolkit provides clear, customizable templates for email, text, and voice message communication, making it easier for school leaders to keep families, staff, and community members informed in a timely, transparent, and consistent way. Whether it is a weather event, lockdown, or transportation disruption, having prepared messages on hand saves precious time and helps build community trust.

We encourage all LEAs to review the toolkit and integrate it into your crisis

communication protocols. Together, we can ensure the right message gets to the right people at the right time—when it matters most.



September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month: Ideas for Action

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and a time dedicated to raising awareness, educating students and staff, and fostering a supportive environment around mental health.

LEARN The 2025-2026 Suicide Prevention Training for Employees has just been updated and will be released soon.

ENCOURAGE HELP-SEEKING by spreading the word about these crisis services: 988 and SafeUT.

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY is September 10, 2025.

Instructional Materials Update: Child Sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking Prevention

At the August meeting, the Utah State Board of Education approved new **instructional materials** to support **child sexual abuse and human trafficking prevention** efforts in schools. These materials span three categories:

- **Adult-Serving Youth Instructional Materials**
- **Parent/Guardian Instructional Materials**
- **Elementary Student Instructional Materials**

Several approved resources address **both child sexual abuse and human trafficking prevention in a single package**, offering streamlined support for educators and schools.

To view the updated list of approved materials, visit the [Prevention Child Sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking Prevention webpage](#) on the [USBE prevention webpage](#).

USBE currently has an active Request for Proposals (RFP) to contract a statewide provider that will supply **elementary student instructional materials** to schools **free of charge**, in alignment with [Utah Code Section 53G-9-207](#). Stay tuned for updates as the contract process moves forward—more information will be shared as it becomes available.

Every Day Counts Statewide Attendance Campaign Has Begun

USBE has launched a **new statewide attendance campaign, *Every Day Counts***, to spotlight the importance of regular school attendance and help families, schools, and communities reduce chronic absenteeism. According to recent USBE data, nearly 1 in 5 Utah students is chronically absent—a growing concern that spans every grade level, region, and demographic group across the state.

The *Every Day Counts* campaign includes outreach resources for families, educator training, data tracking tools, and community partnerships to address transportation, mental health, and other challenges that impact student attendance. Additional information and resources can be found on the [Stronger Schools Start with Commitment: Help Build a Culture Where Every Day Counts flyer](#) and on the [Absenteeism and Truancy Prevention webpage under the Attendance Campaign tab](#).

Announcing the 2025-2026 Do the Write Thing Challenge

We are excited to announce the **2025-2026 Do the Write Thing (DtWT) Challenge**, an initiative aimed at empowering middle school students to discuss and address youth violence through writing. The Challenge is open to all middle

school students and offers the opportunity to examine the impact of youth violence on their lives and communicate in writing what they think should be done to change the culture of violence. The Challenge is managed by the USBE Prevention Team in association with the Utah DtWT Committee, which includes USBE staff and educators.

Governor Cox has been vocal about his support of the DtWT Challenge, stating that “the DtWT Challenge ultimately strives to help them (students) break the cycle of violence in their homes, school and neighborhoods. In today’s social media climate, the DtWT Challenge offers the opportunity for students to express their view in a non-threatening manner. Teachers should encourage students to participate.”

Teachers are invited to join a webinar scheduled on **from 3:00 – 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 23, 2025**. The webinar will provide an overview of the Challenge, classroom lesson plans, resources, and guidelines on how to facilitate student-friendly discussion about the topic. [Join the webinar live via Zoom](#).

For instructions on how to participate, teachers can visit the [Utah Do the Write Thing Challenge webpage](#) or contact [Cuong Nguyen](#) (cuong.nguyen@schools.utah.gov) for more information.

Utah State Board of Education Updates Definitions to Include Accountability Practice

In the April 3, 2025 meeting, the Utah State Board of Education amended [Board Rule R277-609: Standards for LEA Discipline Policy](#) to introduce a new term: “**Accountability practice**.” This term was officially added to the Board’s glossary in June 2025, when [Board Rule R277-100: Definitions for Utah State Board of Education Rules](#) was subsequently updated to include the new term.

What Are Accountability Practices?

As stated in [Board Rule 277-609: Standards for LEA Discipline Policy](#), “Accountability practice means any evidence-based practice that increases academic outcomes, decreases behavior that disrupts the learning environment and holds students accountable for their actions by requiring them to take responsibility to repair harm and provide restitution when appropriate.

Some practices include adapting instruction to increase engagement, behavior plans, and restorative practices.”

In short, accountability practices help create a more supportive and effective learning environment by focusing on both academic success and personal responsibility.

Why This Matters

Going forward, USBE staff will use the term “accountability practice” to refer to strategies that meet this definition.

Want to Learn More or Request Training?

LEAs can submit a request through the [Student Services Training Request Portal \(TRP\)](#) to connect with the USBE Prevention Team about Accountability practices. Whether you are looking for training or just want more information, the team is here to help!

Utah State Board of Education Updates School Safety and Student Services Webpage

WHAT: The School Safety and Student Services webpage has been updated to reflect the changes in our section and teams. The USBE Prevention team is housed under this section.

WHO: All LEA staff who participate in the work of prevention, school safety, and student services (behavior, school-based mental health, school nursing and wellness, and student and family services), parents, stakeholders, and community members.

WHEN: Updated content is live and available for use.

WHERE: [School Safety and Student Services webpage](#).

ACTION: Visit our [School Safety and Student Services webpage](#) to learn more about available resources and technical assistance.

INFORMATION: Please visit the [School Safety and Student Services Contacts webpage](#) to connect with personnel who can support the work of your LEA.



A message from SafeUT

SafeUT and USBE want to provide assurance that we continue to carefully monitor all potential school threat tips submitted to the SafeUT app. With any tips SafeUT receives, the team of licensed counselors works with school administrators and law enforcement as necessary.

Immediately reporting concerns to SafeUT through the “Submit a Tip” feature on the app or SafeUT’s website (SafeUT.org), ensures that the information gets to the proper authorities, who can then investigate it. Sharing posts on social media does not guarantee the concern will be received by authorities and likely increases the community’s anxiety.



Prevention Stars



We are pleased to recognize **Sierra Marsh** as the **Prevention Star for September 2025**.

Sierra Marsh, the Prevention and Youth in Care (YIC) Coordinator for the Murray City School District, is a driving force behind a proactive, systematic approach to prevention in her community. In her three years in this role, Sierra has collaborated with various agencies to implement several key upstream prevention programs. She spearheaded the adoption of Sources of Strength in Murray Schools and is strengthening implementation across Utah by organizing the state's first Sources of Strength Training for Trainers. Sierra secured Sources of Strength being offered as a class in each of Murray's three secondary schools, ensuring the program has a lasting, structural presence. Beyond suicide prevention, her work extends to substance use prevention; she was even featured on KSL alongside Parents Empowered to discuss the powerful role parents play in preventing underage drinking. Sierra has also introduced upstream (universal prevention) programming in elementary schools, including the new adoption of the Wayfinder curriculum for grades K-6. Sierra's prevention work extends to facilitating the district's Question. Persuade. Refer. (QPR) lessons, coordinating the Check & Connect program, and serving as the Chair of the Murray Partners 4 Prevention Coalition. Her collaborative and systematic approach ensures that diverse community members, including teachers, administrators, parents, and students, have a voice in shaping prevention efforts.



Sources of Strength Training of Trainers, June 2025

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

This month we would like to put the spotlight on **Tina Morandy, Executive Secretary** and the heart of the Prevention team!

In every successful team, there is someone who quietly keeps everything running smoothly—someone who does not seek the spotlight but deserves it more than anyone. For the Prevention team at USBE, that person is Tina Morandy.



Tina is the heartbeat of our operations. As our Executive Secretary, she is the one who answers every call, keeps our calendars aligned, and ensures that no detail slips through the cracks. Whether it is scheduling training, coordinating travel logistics, or processing invoices and bills, Tina handles it all with grace and precision. Her work behind the scenes is what allows the rest of us to focus on our mission.

But Tina's contributions go far beyond logistics. She brings a spirit of positivity and responsiveness that lifts the entire team. Her helpful nature and can-do attitude make her the go-to person for just about everything. Need a room booked for a training? Tina is already on it. Unsure about a deadline? Tina has the answer. Facing a last-minute change? Tina finds a solution. Her presence is felt in every meeting and training we do, and her name appears in countless emails coordinating logistics and supporting our work.

Tina is not just a colleague; she is the glue that holds us together. She has

twenty-five years of institutional knowledge about USBE, and for that and many other reasons, we often say we could not do our work without Tina. Her dedication, warmth, and organizational brilliance make her an irreplaceable part of our team.

So today, we shine the spotlight on Tina Morandy, with deep gratitude and admiration.

Tina Morandy

Email: tina.morandy@schools.utah.gov

Phone: (801) 538-7526

Prevention Executive Secretary



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 Training Request Portal \(TRP\)](#).

Remember to put the following dates on your calendars.



2025-2026 Prevention and Student Services Webinar Series

WHAT: The USBE Prevention and Student Services Teams are announcing the 2025-2026 Prevention and Student Services Webinar Series.

WHO: School administrators, prevention staff, behavior specialists, school counselors, social workers, teachers, school mentors, and staff who work directly with students.

WHEN: Dates are listed in MIDAS (see links under "action")

- Thursday, August 21, 2025 | 12:00 p.m.
- Thursday, September 18, 2025 | 12:00 p.m.
- Thursday, November 20, 2025 | 12:00 p.m.
- Thursday, December 18, 2025 | 12:00 p.m.
- Thursday, January 15, 2026 | 12:00 p.m.
- Thursday, February 19, 2026 | 12:00 p.m.
- Thursday, March 19, 2026 | 12:00 p.m.
- Thursday, April 16, 2026 | 12:00 p.m.
- Thursday, May 21, 2026 | 12:00 p.m.

WHERE: Online on Zoom.

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

INFORMATION: Reach out to prevention@schools.utah.gov or visit the [USBE Prevention webpage](#) for more information.

Prevention Workshop for Charter Schools

WHAT: In April and May 2025, the USBE prevention team held a six-hour workshop at various locations across the state. We received a number of requests from attendees for the USBE Prevention team to provide the opportunity specifically for Charter School teams.

This workshop will cover prevention science, implementing protective factors, and developing a comprehensive prevention plan.

WHO: LEAs across the state are invited to submit a request. Ideal attendees include administrators, LEA staff, and prevention teams. We ask that each session includes at least ten participants.

WHEN: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 | 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

WHERE: Granite School District (Auditorium E)
2500 South State Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

ACTION: [Register for the Prevention Workshop via MIDAS Course ID #64851](#)

INFORMATION: For more information, please email prevention@schools.utah.gov.

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) Trainings

WHAT: USBE will be hosting multiple YMHFA trainings throughout 2025 and 2026. 7.5 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:

- Friday, September 26, 2025 | 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Friday, October 24, 2025 | 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, November 19, 2025 | 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, January 20, 2026 | 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Friday, March 13, 2026 | 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- 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](#)

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 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: Various dates and locations throughout the year. Please see the attached document for training dates and locations.

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

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

The January training date and location are not set; registered participants will be notified via MIDAS once finalized.

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

WHAT: USBE is partnering with the Center for Schools and Communities to provide a Bullying Prevention Program to 15 schools in Utah. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) has over forty years of research and successful implementation worldwide.

WHO: One representative from each participating school is invited to train as an Olweus Coach.

WHEN: Training will occur in October 2025 with implementation beginning in the 2026-2027 school year.

INFORMATION: For additional information and if your school is interested in participating, please contact [Becca Rae](mailto:becca.rae@schools.utah.gov) (becca.rae@schools.utah.gov).

Mandt Trainings

WHAT: USBE is offering free Mandt trainings during the 2025-2026 school year. These trainings offer an option for key identified school employees to receive comprehensive ESI training (see [Board Rule R277-608: Prohibition of Corporal Punishment in Utah's Public Schools](#) for more information).

WHO: Key identified school employees.

WHEN: Dates are listed in MIDAS (see links under “Action” below).

WHERE: In-person, specific addresses are listed in MIDAS (see links under “Action” below)

ACTION:

- [Register for a NEW CERTIFICATION via MIDAS Course ID #65715](#)
- [Register for a RE-CERTIFICATION via MIDAS Course ID #65711](#)

INFORMATION: For content questions, please contact [Ashley Lower](mailto:ashley.lower@schools.utah.gov) (ashley.lower@schools.utah.gov). For registration questions, please contact [Millie Mortensen](mailto:millie.mortensen@schools.utah.gov) (millie.mortensen@schools.utah.gov).



Utah School Counseling Association (USCA) Annual Conference **November 20-21 | Davis Conference Center**

Join us at the Davis Convention Center for two days of inspiration, learning, and connection. Early bird registration ends September 19, 2025.

[Register Now for the USCA Annual Conference](#)



Utah Fall Conference on Substance Use: October 22-24, 2025

Join us at the Davis Convention Center for two days of inspiration, learning, and connection. Early bird registration ends September 19, 2025.

[Register now for the Utah Fall Conference on Substance Use](#)

Trauma Sensitive Schools Courses

Through online coursework via Canvas, the USBE Trauma Sensitive Schools Professional Learning follows a Trauma Skilled Schools Model (National Dropout Prevention Center, 2018) and is delivered in the following three courses.



- **Course 1: Becoming Trauma Informed Learning Modules**

- Informs all school personnel (certified and classified) about the prevalence and impact of trauma and toxic stress in the lives of Utah students.
- Builds capacity for individuals and schools who support students Pre-K through Grade 12.

- **Course 2: Trauma Informed Practices Learning Modules**
 - Equips all school personnel (classified and certified) with trauma informed educational practices.
 - Builds capacity for individuals and schools who support students Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12.
- **Course 3: Trauma Sensitive Schools Implementation and Maintenance Learning Modules**
 - Intended specifically for LEA leaders and building administrators.
 - Builds capacity for administrators in moving towards a sustainable, systemic approach for trauma sensitive school practices.

If you are interested, please visit the [USBE Trauma Sensitive Schools Courses](#) webpage to learn more and to register.

September Board Meeting

Summary of Highlights

The Utah State Board of Education:

- Released an internal audit report on the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
- Amended and approved a letter that will be sent to the U.S. Department of Education
- Board approves fee schedule addition
- Board approve plan to address funding loss for statewide longitudinal data system
- Board awards charter school revolving loan
- Board establishes data systems and reporting advisory committee
- Board recommends sunset two education interim committee items
- Board approves strategic plan
 - Elevate student learning
 - Promote educator quality and effectiveness



- Optimize oversight and accountability
- [Full agenda](#)

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

- [R277-726, Statewide Online Education Program \(SOEP\)](#). This rule is being amended to reflect changes made in the legislative session, including House Bill (H.B.) 246 and Senate Bill (S.B.) 137.
- [R277-400, School Facility Emergency and Safety](#). This rule is being amended to be in alignment with legislation.
- [R277-125, Small School District Capital Projects](#). This rule is being amended to add a One Time Funding Appropriations for Small School Districts clause after the passage of H.B. 462 created a new grant program for rural school athletic facilities.
- [R277-622, School-based Mental Health Qualifying Grant Program](#). This rule is being amended to remove an outdated funding match requirement.
- [R277-318, Teacher Salary Supplement Program \(TSSP\)](#). This rule is being repealed because Salary Supplement for Highly Needed Educators (SHINE) is now fully operational.
- [H.B. 447 Statewide Catalyst Campus Model](#), which created licensing exceptions for industry professionals teaching in catalyst centers.

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

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.

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Utah State
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Prevention

Contact Us

[Meet the Prevention Team](#)

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

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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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