

CERTIFIED TEACHER LIBRARIAN PRACTICES:



FOSTERING SUCCESS IN UTAH'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Two elementary schools in Salt Lake School District were identified and examined to determine which innovative and intentional practices were implemented by their certified teacher librarians.

The practice sites for this study included two elementary schools in the Salt Lake City School district.

To be considered an outlier, a school had to demonstrate achievement in the 85th percentile or higher in the state for the included grade levels over two school years. This criterion identified the top 15% of schools for each school year. Schools also had to employ a full-time certified teacher librarian.

Emily Dejong, Librarian
Beacon Heights Elementary
emily.dejong@slcschools.org

Tim Miller, Principal
Beacon Heights Elementary
tim.miller@slcschools.org

Michele Edgley, Librarian
Uintah Elementary
michele.edgley@slcschools.org

Bruce Simpson, Principal
Uintah Elementary
bruce.simpson@slcschools.org

Research and state impact studies have demonstrated that **there is a positive relationship between student academic achievement and the quality of a school library program**, expressly when operated with a certified teacher librarian (CTL) (Lance & Kachel, 2018). Library experiences have the potential to impact student success. According to Wine et al., 2023, "The school library is one of the microsystems that students and teachers interact with in the school environment. These interactions with the school library and school librarians provide opportunities to influence student learning" (p. 1).

This study examined CTL practices through the five standards outlined in the Highly Effective Schools Through Librarians (HESTL) framework. Expertise and training in the field of librarianship were evidenced by both teachers across the five practices including:

- **Planning**
- **Instruction**
- **Leadership**
- **Environment**
- **Management**

When CTLs and classroom teachers collaborate as instructional partners, the library becomes a learning environment that enhances and supports student learning outcomes. School libraries and the roles of CTLs are strengthened by administrative support of the CTLs as educators with expertise that improves student learning, fosters 21st century competencies, and facilitates technology integration.

One limitation to instilling a CTL is the availability of full-time certified positions, yet the impact may be worth allocating a CTL position. Tim Miller, Beacon Heights Elementary School Principal, "I don't think our teachers would let [our librarian] go. The Beacon Heights' teachers have had a certified librarian for so many years that they wouldn't want to be in this school without one. They realize that **expertise in that space is very valuable.**"

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Utah Leading through Effective, Actionable, and Dynamic (ULEAD) Education was created to find, research, and highlight proven practices in Utah schools for replication statewide. ULEAD partners with practitioners, researchers, and education organizations to develop and curate resources, foster collaboration, and drive systemic change for improved student outcomes. The ULEAD Clearinghouse is a growing repository of innovative, effective, and efficient practice resources and tools to support educators.

The ULEAD Steering Committee, composed of current Utah educators and stakeholders, meets quarterly to inform the focus priorities that ULEAD will research. ULEAD uses data to find positive outliers in each focus area and create reports, such as this one, illuminating the practices and policies that lead to positive outcomes. At the time of this report, these priorities

include: Student Attendance, Educator Retention and Job Satisfaction, Strategic Engagement through Technology, Middle School Mathematics Success, and Multilingual Learner Achievement. Additional priorities are under review.

This report addresses the practices of Certified Teacher Librarians that may positively impact student success in elementary school. ULEAD collaborates with Institutes of Higher Education and education practitioners to develop Innovative Practice Reports. This report was developed in partnership with Utah State University.

RESEARCHER

Kelli Munns, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Utah State University
kelli.munns@usu.edu

Dr. Kelli Munns leads the School Library Program at Utah State University in addition to teaching and mentoring Instructional Technology & Learning Sciences graduate students. Munns earned her MEd in Leadership in Education and Administration Development at Southern Utah University. Her doctoral research was focused on using simulation technology as a feedback modality for performance competencies with an emphasis on feedback literacy. Prior to joining USU faculty, Munns was the keynote speaker for the USU Empowering Teaching Excellence (ETE) Conference in 2017 and was named the Animal, Dairy and Veterinary Sciences teacher of the year in 2018. Currently, she serves on the Board of the Utah School Library Association and is an avid equestrian.