

EDUCATION



THE UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Report to the Education Interim
Committee

Utah Leading through Effective, Actionable, and Dynamic (ULEAD) Education

November 2024

Meghan Everette
Director, ULEAD
Meghan.everette@schools.utah.gov

STATUTORY REQUIREMENT

U.C.A. Section 53E-10-702 requires the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) to submit a report on innovative and successful K-12 practices in Utah and other states, prioritizing practices in Utah and in the report, propose changes to remove barriers to implementation of successful practices. **U.C.A. Section 53E-10-703** requires USBE to submit a report on ULEAD research and other activities including examples of innovative practice reports and the current status of relationships with participating institutions.

The State Board is required to report on this program to the Education Interim Committee annually on or before November 30. This year marks the fourth year for this report.

Utah Leading through Effective, Actionable, and Dynamic (ULEAD) Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Utah Leading through Effective, Actionable, and Dynamic (ULEAD) Education is required to report on successful K -12 practices in Utah and other states and propose policy changes to remove barriers to implementation successful practices.

Notably, successful and innovative practices across topic areas rely on both easy access to and effective use of data. Successful teachers and teacher teams also need considerable time to investigate and interpret data, troubleshoot, collaboratively plan for implementation, and reflect on practice. To best support practice replication, providing high-quality, easy to use data systems and protecting collaborative time within the school day should be emphasized.

This report includes a brief review of report findings, limitations or barriers, and recommendations for supporting best practice implementation at scale. An overview of ULEAD additional materials, current partnerships, related legislation, and ULEAD program updates are also included.

Table of Contents

THE UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
BACKGROUND	4
FOCUS PRIORITIES.....	4
Focus Priority Reports: Findings & Recommendations	5
Recommendation Summary	12
Additional Reports	12
Collaboration and Innovation Cohorts	13
PARTNERSHIPS.....	14
PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.....	16
Related Legislation	16
Communication	18
REFERENCES.....	19

BACKGROUND

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.

In 2023-2024 the ULEAD Steering Committee met quarterly to address and advise focus priority topics that ULEAD pursued. In addition to the formalized role of informing priorities, Steering Committee members have provided valuable insight and feedback to program activities and plans.

FOCUS PRIORITIES

The Steering Committee identified the 2024-2025 ULEAD Focus Priorities as:

- **Educator Retention and Job Satisfaction, with an emphasis on Teacher Job Satisfaction**
- **Student Attendance**
- **Academic Success through Strategic Engagement through Technology**
- **Middle Grade Mathematics Student Achievement**
- **Multilingual Learner Student Achievement**

Priorities under further review include:

- Early Literacy Student Achievement
- Academic Success through Social Emotional Supports Grounded in Academic Practice

Priorities were based on contributions from the field, stakeholder surveys, and recent data.

A framing of these issues with national and local research statistics was completed and shared for feedback. They were provided to Deans at institutions of higher education in Utah, the Utah Colleges of Education Deans, and through an open call for research proposals.

The findings and recommendations of this report are specific to the outliers from 2023-2024 year.

Focus Priority Reports: Findings & Recommendations

Focus Area: Student Attendance

Report: Attendance Strategies

Webinar: A ULEAD Promising Practices Panel: Attendance Research & Strategies

A fall 2023 report from seven Utah schools across four districts plus a public charter school found schools with effective attendance plans include:

1. Relationship building with students and families
2. Accurate attendance tracking
3. Timely communication
4. Parent education

New this year was an attendance webinar in April 2024 with a Utah principal, Utah district staff, Utah district data scientist, Utah State University researcher, and USBE attendance expert. The webinar was offered live, allowing for participant questions, and was recorded. The recording is posted with related materials referenced in the webinar on the ULEAD website.

Effective strategies shared in the webinar included:

- Hiring attendance specialists to work directly with schools and families;
- Running “Attendance Matters” classes for students and parents;
- Taking a strengths-based approach, rather than a punitive approach;
- Communicating with families about the importance of attendance and the positive outcomes of attending school regularly;
- Providing families with access to resources that can help them overcome barriers to attendance.

Barriers and needs related to improving attendance shared in the webinar included:

- A lack of accurate data on attendance and the need for a statewide Student Information System or other unified Early Warning System that is consistently implemented.
- A lack of information on the leading indicators of attendance, such as the reasons why students are absent from school. Participants noted that understanding the leading indicators of attendance locally is a critical factor in being able to create viable attendance support for families.

Focus Area: Middle Grade Mathematics

Report: Effective Middle Grade Mathematics

Video: SciTech Now: Best Practices for Middle School Math Instruction (ULEAD)

Seven Title 1 middle grade math teachers representing five Utah schools across four school districts detailed their mathematical teaching practices through semi-structured interviews. Teachers were selected through a systematic process. Those invited to participate represented middle-grade teachers from Title 1 schools whose students exhibited the highest growth on the RISE Mathematics assessment.

Practices common across schools that were also highlighted in related literature included:

- Instructional Planning
 - Team Planning
 - Mapping the Curriculum
- Delivering Instruction
 - Attending to Affect
 - Direct Guidance Alongside Partner/Group Reasoning and Practice
 - Whiteboards as Student Resources
 - Practicing without Over-Practicing
- Assessment Practices
 - Data-driven Reteaching
 - Allowing “Re-dos”

Self-reported successful practices were in alignment with Utah’s Pk-12 Mathematics Framework which is designed to: provide stakeholders with “an evidence-based framework and self-assessment tool to identify strengths and areas of growth, and evidence-based practices that will yield positive mathematical outcomes for students” (USBE, 2022, p. 10).

Barriers and limitations to replication of practices in this report were few. These investments relied on small but intentional deviations in teachers' regular classroom practice. Given this, a report recommendation for administrators was to support team planning time within regular teacher hours. Participants emphasized the importance of collaborative planning structures.

Focus Area: Early Literacy

Report: Supporting the Science of Reading: Instructional Design Clarity

Webinar: A ULEAD Promising Practices Panel: Early Literacy & Instructional Clarity

Seven focus groups were conducted with 20 teachers and five learning coaches across the identified Title 1 and non-Title 1 school grade level teams within the Washington County School District to illuminate reading practices that have contributed to student success. K-3rd grade teams were selected though effect sizes calculated using beginning- and middle-of-year Acadience composite score data from the 2023-2024 school year.

The schools identified as outliers in the dataset exhibited each of the five Utah Teaching Effective Standards. However, Standard 2: Instructional Design Clarity was directly evident in the work of these educators. These teams displayed clarity in how they “organize and sequence instruction and effectively plan for learning and student engagement” (USBE, 2023, p. 14), evidencing an established collaborative process for addressing student learning. The four report themes included:

- Student Learning Orientation
- Goal Orientation
- Continuous Collaboration

- Robust School District Supports

Recommendations for schools and districts wishing to support Instructional Design Clarity and raise student achievement through Science of Reading Implementation included:

- Reduce friction to data access; for example, streamlining platforms or developing routine monitoring assessments in digital, quick-feedback formats
- Facilitate focus including consistent and frequent messaging of prioritized practices and systems
- Provide ongoing professional learning to supplement and provide continued support after initial LETRS training

Following the release of the report, one of the highlighted teams along with the research and USBE literacy staff conducted a webinar in October 2024. In the webinar, teachers shared the digital system they use for short, common formative assessments on distinct skills such as letter names and sounds that allowed them access to timely, specific data about each student. Webinar participants indicated a high interest in the availability of such tools and how they were funded. An important consideration in replication that was not highlighted in the report, but was evident in the webinar, was access to easy-to-use formative assessments on discrete skills.

Focus Area: Early Literacy

Report: Effective First Grade Literacy Teaching Teams

Video: Effective First Grade Literacy Teaching Teams

Related Publications: Theme Overview: Consistent Use of Data to Inform Instruction, Theme Overview: High Team Efficacy and Collaboration, Theme Overview: Student Goal Setting and Monitoring

Four outlier teacher teams excelling in first grade literacy were interviewed to understand their practices contributing to grade-level success while implementing the Science of Reading within the BYU-School Partnership districts. Through semi-structured team interviews, researchers aimed to identify common practices that contributed to team success, with the goal of replicating them among other early literacy teams. Three core practices common among the teams included:

- Consistent Use of Data to Inform Instruction
- High Team Efficacy and Collaboration
- Student Goal Setting and Monitoring

Additional supportive structures contributing to the success of teams included access to high-quality instructional materials, straightforward access to data, instructional coaching support, professional learning, and professional learning communities. The teachers also employed all five of Utah's High Leverage Teaching Practices in their work.

Teachers discussed foundational experiences that contributed to their success, largely related to specific professional learning. The report notes that for other teams to have the same success, they require guidance on how to monitor, assess, and instruct in very tangible ways. For example, teachers relied on modeled lessons and reflections in addition to Science of Reading training.

Focus Area: Job Satisfaction

Report: Principal Job Satisfaction: Five Takeaways from a Burnout Survey of Utah Administrators

In order to develop an Innovative Practice Report with principals experiencing high job satisfaction, a burnout study was conducted with Utah administrators. The identified outliers were interviewed for a forthcoming report specific to practices that increase job satisfaction.

In the interim, a report highlighting the findings from the burnout survey was developed.

Five key takeaways were:

- Utah principals are more likely than not to be satisfied with their jobs.
- Utah principals feel a sense of accomplishment but are exhausted.
- Utah principals feel their workload is overwhelming but find strong overlap in their values and the values of their schools.
- Relationships matter. Time spent working directly with students and staff contribute most to principal satisfaction.
- Utah principals say negative adult behaviors and a lack of support would contribute to them leaving their current role.

Strategies of positive outliers were not investigated in this survey overview but will be prepared in an upcoming report. What the survey does indicate is Utah principals are currently challenged by their workload.

The Wallace Foundation review of 20 years of evidence on principals concludes that the principal's influence extends beyond teacher satisfaction. The report states that "if a school district could invest in improving the performance of just one adult in a school building, investing in the principal is likely the most efficient way to affect student achievement" (Grissom et al., 2021, p. 40).

Recommendation Summary

Ease of access to timely, reliable data is critical across topic areas. Reducing friction to data access was accomplished in a variety of ways by outlier schools and districts including limiting the number of platforms teachers are required to know and use and developing and/or funding access to quick, easy-to-use systems for monitoring student skills attainment. The need for a common Student Information System for attendance and the importance of accurate, easy to use data was highlighted across topics.

Teachers required considerable time spent in collaboration to be effective. Across age groups and domains, successful teachers emphasized collaborative learning and planning time. This time was used to collect and analyze data, plan for data-driven response to instruction, model lessons and ongoing implementation learning, and to set team and student goals.

Additional Reports

- Several research projects are in progress including:
 - An Innovative Practice Report on high school attendance practices contributing to raising daily attendance rates in Utah.
 - An Innovative Practice Report on the impact and practices of Certified Teacher Librarians in Utah.
 - An Innovative Practice Report on the practices leading to higher principal job satisfaction in Utah.

- An Innovative Practice Report detailing 3rd grade literacy teaching practices leading to, or detracting from, student achievement in Utah.
- An Innovative Practice Report exploring highly effective 6th grade mathematics teaching teams.
- ULEAD is facilitating a follow-up study to the Covid Impact and Recovery Study examining school-level practices impacting successful recovery in student achievement.
- ULEAD is facilitating the Board-directed study of vulnerabilities facing Utah boys and, separately, Utah girls.
- ULEAD has developed Fact Sheets, available on the ULEAD website and shared with potential research partners, that highlight topics of interest and provide a snapshot of available outlier information to promote research partnerships and highlight research needs.

Collaboration and Innovation Cohorts

ULEAD Futures Learning Design Fellowship

The USBE Innovative Improvement Initiative (I3) is designed to support school leadership teams to engage in innovative strategies to address the challenges facing Utah students with disabilities. In an effort to support innovation and collaboration, ULEAD partnered with the USBE I3 project to lead Phase 1 of the 3-part initiative.

Expert facilitators from the Stanford d.school guided cohort teams through a blend of futures and design thinking practices, toward envisioning and executing tangible plans for improving learning experiences of students in need. In-person workshops in Utah were supplemented by virtual coaching sessions and expert lectures by education futurists.

ULEAD is working with I3 USBE staff to monitor and document innovative practices and implementation successes over the upcoming two phases of the project:

Phase 2: Support School Improvement Planning and Integrated Implementation Coaching

Phase 3: Potential I3 Grant Funding of up to \$500,000 per year for three years

Findings will be reported in future ULEAD Innovative Practice Reports.

ULEAD Collaboration and Innovation Cohort: Middle Grade Mathematics

The Middle Grade Math Cohort was designed to promote innovation and collaboration with middle grade teams throughout the state of Utah. Starting in May 2024, teams from ten different LEAs are participating in a year-long cohort to identify, plan, and implement mathematic practices in their schools and share their learning in ULEAD Innovative Practice Reports.

To date, participants have collaboratively explored research-based mathematics practices, participated in virtual and in-person training, had school visits to collect baseline data tailored to their problem of practice, researched successful practices, and created implementation plans that will be enacted and refined over the upcoming year.

PARTNERSHIPS

Higher Education ULEAD works continuously to engage higher education researchers in collaborative research projects. Current collaborations include:

- Brigham Young University and the BYU-Public School Partnership
- University of Utah and Utah Education Policy Center
- Utah State University

- Utah Valley University

Utah Council of Education Deans (UCED) ULEAD has presented to UCED on ULEAD's focus priorities and research interests. In addition, ULEAD is facilitating a September 2025 research conference focused on the Science of Learning to be held in Salt Lake City. ULEAD is the lead conference planner for this event, in collaboration with UCED and ResearchEd.

CEEDAR and USBE ULEAD is working with The Collaboration for Effective Education Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center, Utah teacher education faculty, and USBE staff to support efforts to highlight and support effective practices in Utah uncovered through the technical assistance collaboration.

Utah Education Network The Utah Education Network (UEN) created a series of over forty instructional videos highlighting effective literacy practices in action in outlier schools. These videos are housed in the UEN Learning Hub associated with the Early Literacy Repository. UEN has also developed a Sci-Now video highlighting the middle grade mathematics innovative practice report which is hosted on UEN's professional learning site as well as ongoing runs on UEN-TV.

Utah Coalition for Educational Technology (UCET) ULEAD worked with UCET to develop an LEA practice highlight area at the annual UCET conference in March. LEAs were invited to host poster-type table sessions highlighting innovative or promising practices in their area. ULEAD hosted a resource table in the highlight area. ULEAD also presented about the ULEAD program, innovation, research findings, and innovation grant opportunities.

Approximately 3,000 people attended the two-day conference.

Connections ULEAD is a part of multiple education initiatives and groups throughout USBE and the broader community including:

- Intermountain Healthcare Foundation
- Science of Reading, Change Management Planning Team
- Secondary School Transition Team, Partnership Workgroup
- USBE Attendance Workgroup
- USBE Data and Statistics
- USBE Analytics Center of Excellence

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Related Legislation

Science of Reading The 2022 Utah State Legislature’s Senate Bill (S.B.) 127: Early Outcomes Improvement directs and supports a collaborative partnership between USBE, the Center for the School of the Future, and ULEAD Education to develop and maintain an online repository of digital Science of Reading and Science of Reading instruction resources that are accessible to public school teachers, school leaders, parents, and educator preparation programs.

ULEAD and USBE secured an agreement through the RFP process including the Expert Science of Reading Panel. The agreement resulted in monthly curated and vetted materials

being posted to the Early Literacy Repository through spring 2024. These materials include over 40 instructional videos developed by UEN and ULEAD.

Education Innovation Program & Teacher Innovation Grants The 2022 Utah State Legislature's House Bill (H.B.) 486: Education Innovation Program and related rule R277-918 establish that Local Education Agencies may approve alternative classroom schedules or alternative curriculum. Approved programs can receive up to a \$5,000 grant and program outcomes are reported through ULEAD.

- In the 2024 session, the legislation was updated to require ULEAD to actively market the program.
- There have been 68 applications approved and submitted to date, with all but 11 of those coming after ULEAD's marketing efforts.
- Innovations are highly varied and exist at all grade levels and in both traditional public and charter schools. Classes occur during the regular school day, during interim school terms, and after school.
- While much variation exists, some common funding categories include:
 - Digital licenses for supportive programs including design software, simulations, and mathematics tools
 - Literature such as science of social studies thematic text sets
 - Consumable materials including art materials, workbooks, and take-home kits to support learning away from the classroom
 - Reading texts and materials to support multilingual learners
 - Infrastructure needs such as additional iPads, charging stations, or laptops
- Early reporting from teachers and schools suggest that innovation experiences are enriching for students and foster greater student engagement and interest while

imparting important subject matter content.

Communication

Communication of the ULEAD program, activities, and reports continues to be a focus with efforts now shifting away from foundational needs such as templates and website layout, to continual presentation and participation in educator spaces.

Design ULEAD reports have been developed with a consistent design, color scheme, and meet the USBE design requirements. Materials are always created to be ADA compliant and older materials are updated to reflect current compliance.

Contact Lists ULEAD has developed a contact list and a newsletter sign-up that is integrated with the MailChimp format used at USBE.

Website The USBE website underwent a significant redesign in January 2024. The ULEAD webpages were updated to facilitate ease of navigation and highlight recent reports and program activities.

Presenting ULEAD has engaged in several state and national conference opportunities to build awareness of the program, report on research findings, and share the potential for collaboration.

- ULEAD staff presented at internal and external meetings such as:
 - BYU Public School Partnership Principals Academy
 - Equity Labs

- State Mathematics Education Coordinating Committee
- USBE Analytics Center for Excellence
- USBE Leadership Council
- Utah AI Collaborative
- Utah Charter Schools
- Utah Council of Education Deans
- Utah Valley University Leadership Program
- ULEAD staff shared resources and presentations at multiple conferences including:
 - STEM Best Practices Conference
 - Utah Rural Schools Association Conference
 - Utah Council of Teachers of Mathematics Conference
 - Utah Coalition for Educational Technology & Utah Educational Library Media Association Joint Conference

REFERENCES

Grissom, Jason A., Anna J. Egalite, and Constance A. Lindsay. (2021). *How principals affect students and schools: A systematic synthesis of two decades of research*. The Wallace Foundation. <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/principalsynthesis>

Utah State Board of Education. (2022). Utah's pk-12 mathematics framework. https://www.schools.utah.gov/curr/mathematics/_mathematics_/UtahMathematicsFramework.pdf

Utah State Board of Education. (2023c). Utah effective teaching standards. Teaching and Learning. <https://www.schools.utah.gov/curr/educatordevelopment/classroomteachers/UtahEffectiveTeachingStandards.pdf>