



Education Exchange:

Where Families and Schools Meet

Volume 1 | Summer/Fall 2025

Why Family Engagement Matters

Research shows that when families are involved in education, students are more likely to:

- Come to school regularly
- Build strong social skills
- Earn better grades
- Graduate from high school
- Continue on to college or other training

Here to Help: Your Family Engagement Team

Cassie Hays

Parent Liaison and Engagement Specialist

Cassie brings nearly 30 years of experience in K–12 education. She has taught, led online learning programs, and founded a charter school. Cassie supports families and schools in building strong partnerships that help students succeed.

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Susie Estrada

School Improvement and Special Education Parent Specialist

Susie has over 17 years of experience in education, including early learning, afterschool programs, special education, and curriculum. She is passionate about equity, family voice, and creating systems that support every learner

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Understanding Parent Rights in Public Education

Utah's Constitution and laws recognize that parents play the most important role in their child's education.

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) values the trust families place in public schools and is committed to supporting parents every step of the way.

Learn More About Parent Rights:

tinyurl.com/UT-ParentRights



Utah State Board of Education



Support & Resources for Utah Families

Community Resources

Utah families can access a wide range of community-based programs to support health, child care, learning, and advocacy. Here are a few programs and organizations support families across Utah:

- **United Way 211**
Local services and support for health, housing, food, and more: 211utah.org
- **Utah PTA**
Parent-led advocacy and family involvement: utahpta.org
- **Utah Afterschool Network**
Access to afterschool programs: utahafterschool.org
- **Child Care Assistance**
Affordable child care options: jobs.utah.gov/occ

Learning & Curriculum Resources

There are many tools available to help families understand what students are learning, how to support them at home, and what is required to graduate. These resources can guide parents through each stage of a student's education:

- **[Utah Core Standards](#)**: Learning expectations by subject and grade
- **[Graduation Requirements](#)**: Required courses for elementary, middle, and high school.
- **[Parent Guides to Student Success](#)**: Tips to support learning at home.
- **Additional Learning Resources** available through our [Parent Portal](#).





Science of Reading & Community Engagement Project

This initiative connects schools, families, and communities through the Science of Reading. The project helps build strong literacy skills at home and at school, with resources and events designed for everyone involved in a child's learning journey.

- Discover tools and resources aligned with the Science of Reading
- Participate in literacy coaching and support for families and communities
- Find guidance on planning family reading events
- Watch the [Science of Reading](#) session

Supporting Students with Disabilities

Education for students with disabilities is protected under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Below are some helpful resources to help families navigate the system.

- » [Understanding the Special Education Referral Process](#): Learn how the process begins and what steps are involved in getting support.
- » [USBE Eligibility Requirements](#): Understand how eligibility is determined for special education services in Utah.
- » [Inclusive Family Engagement Practices](#): Explore strategies for meaningful family involvement in the special education process.
- » [Utah Parent Center](#): A nonprofit offering support, training, and advocacy for families of children with disabilities.



Child Nutrition Programs

Utah's Child Nutrition Programs help make sure students have access to healthy meals at school, during summer, and in afterschool settings.

These programs support learning and wellness by offering breakfast, lunch, snacks, and even fresh local foods. Families may qualify for free or reduced-price meals based on income, and applications are available through your child's school or district.

Utah offers several child nutrition programs:

- [Afterschool Snack Program](#) (ASP)
- [Farm to Fork](#) (F2F)
- [Food Distribution Programs](#) (FDP)

- [National School Breakfast Program](#) (NSBP)
- [National School Lunch Program](#) (NSLP)
- [Seamless Summer Option](#) (SSO)
- [Special Milk Program](#) (SMP)
- [The Emergency Food Assistance Program](#) (TEFAP)

For more information on these program and to see if you qualify for free and reduced-priced meals, visit: schools.utah.gov/cnp

Utah Farm to Fork Day! September 5th
<https://www.utfarmtofork.org/>

2025 Legislative Updates for Families

Each year, new state laws may impact families, students, and public schools. Here are some recent legislative changes from the 2025 session that may be helpful to know:

Attendance ["Every Day Counts" Attendance Campaign 2025](#)

- Defines valid absences: [53G-6-201](#)
- Guidelines for approved absences: [53G-6-205](#)

Homeschooling

- [HB 209](#): Removes affidavit requirement for homeschooling

Health & Consent

- [HB 281](#): Requires parental consent for school-based mental health services

Sex Education

- [HB 566](#): Expands parental input in sex education decisions

School Safety

- [HB 40](#) / [SB 170](#): Establish new standards for physical security, threat response, and communication with families through notification. This includes security upgrades with video, alarms, locks etc.

**When families
and schools
work together,
students
thrive.**



Find Information About Schools and Educators

- » USBE Press Releases: www.schools.utah.gov/publicrelations
- » School Calendars: schools.utah.gov/schoolcalendars
- » School Comparison Tool: schoolcomparison.schools.utah.gov
- » Assessment and School Reports: schools.utah.gov/datastatistics/reports
- » Educator License Lookup: cactus.schools.utah.gov
- » Data Gateway: datagateway.schools.utah.gov