

Prevention Newsletter

May 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 equitable 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.

Five Protective Factors

Focus on Protective Factors

2025 Prevention Workshops

The USBE Prevention Team is pleased to announce the successful conclusion of the 2025 Prevention Workshops. During these sessions, we explored core principles of Prevention Science, the Protective Factor Framework and its application in your prevention work, comprehensive prevention plans, and Implementation Science. Additionally, we provided opportunities for collaboration among colleagues working in prevention within your areas.

We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who participated in the 2025

Prevention Workshops. The team conducted workshops in six different locations across the state, and due to high demand, a seventh workshop was added for those unable to attend the initial dates. We were delighted to be in the field, learning from you, and we greatly appreciate your engagement, participation, and the collaborative spirit demonstrated during the workshops. We hope you found the concepts shared to be valuable and that you left with tools you can integrate into your work in schools.

If you have any questions or require further information about the topics discussed during the workshops, please do not hesitate to contact us at prevention@schools.utah.gov. Some of you have requested additional training and technical assistance related to the concepts presented. If you would like us to provide similar training to others within your school or district, please reach out to us directly. Furthermore, we encourage you to share any other prevention-related professional learning requests to help us plan for the 2025-26 school year.

Thank you once again, and have a wonderful summer break!

(Photos are of the Ogden Prevention Workshop on April 22, 2025)







Prevention Stars



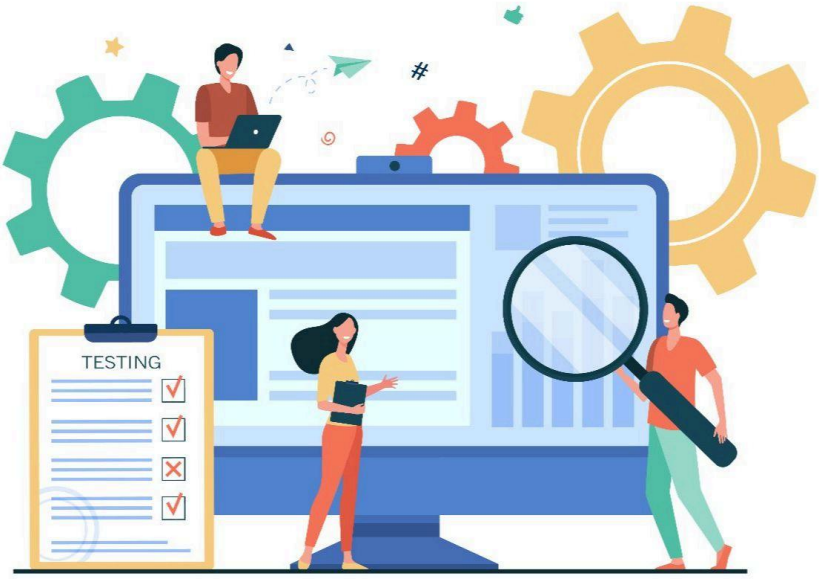
We are pleased to recognize the Logan High School Counseling Team as the Prevention Stars for May.

Douglas Weber, Student Services Director for Logan School District remarked: “Logan High School counselors work tirelessly to help all students succeed. They are amazing! “
Congratulations to Logan High School’s Counseling Team! We are so grateful for all you do to support students.

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 Local Education Agency (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 Updates



Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and a time to recognize the vital role mental health plays in overall well-being and an opportunity to provide resources for those in need. Mental health is crucial at every stage of life, and prioritizing it strengthens individuals, families, and communities. Early mental health support, resilience, and self-care for children and teens is important. Children's Mental Health Awareness Day is on May 8, 2025. Here are some key messages for supporting the mental health of children:

- Supportive families, schools, and communities help children and teens build strong mental health.
- Teaching coping skills early empowers young people to manage emotions and challenges.
- Recognizing early signs of mental health concerns can lead to timely support and positive outcomes.
- Open conversations about emotions help children develop resilience and feel safe seeking help.
- Regular physical activity can improve children's mental health and enhance their well-being.
- Early intervention and support can make a difference for children facing mental health challenges.

Additional resources:
JED Foundation Meet Hope
The National Council for Mental Wellbeing

USBE promotes prevention efforts through increased awareness and resources, aiming to build a stronger network of support for children and families by

fostering a culture of safety and protection. For learning opportunities, visit the USBE Prevention website.

25th Annual Do The Write Thing (DtWT) Challenge Luncheon



Abigail Owens, Fort Herriman Middle School, named as 2025 Do the Write Thing Challenge's Ambassador for Peace, pictured (left to right) with Amy Pulley Moyer, Utah State Board of Education Chair, Matt Hymas, and Utah State Superintendent Sydnee Dickson.

On Friday, April 18, 2025, the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) proudly hosted the 25th annual "Do the Write Thing" or DtWT, luncheon, celebrating the powerful voices of students across the state who are taking a stand against youth violence through their writing. The USBE Prevention Team and the Utah DtWT Committee announced that Abigail Owens of Fort Herriman Middle School was named Utah's distinguished finalist, or "Ambassador for Peace," for the 2025 year. Abigail was awarded a $500 scholarship. Abigail wrote: "The real question that my eyes have not yet found the answer to is, how long will it take for the consequences of those actions to happen to the person who did the bad act, rather than their victim? How long until the world can look at violence through these very tired 14 year old eyes and see what I see?" In addition, three students were recognized as runners-ups; they include: Jaden Cuartelon and Leo Carhuaricra of Sand Ridge Junior High and Miriam Jensen of Roy Junior High. They received a $400 scholarship as an award. Twenty-four students were also named as state finalists and each received a $300 scholarship. Collectively, the DtWT Committee anticipates awarding $8,900 scholarships to these students.

From the challenge emerged an inspiring group of students from 16 schools across Utah. Thirty-three teachers reported that over 1,315 students participated in meaningful in-classroom discussions about forms of violence, how it starts, how it impacts all our lives, and how to stop it. Over 930 students

prepared writings and 338 students decided to submit writings about youth violence for review.

The “Do the Write Thing” challenge, sponsored by USBE’s Prevention team in collaboration with the National Campaign to Stop Violence, invites 7th and 8th grade students to reflect on how youth violence affects their lives—and to express, in their own words, what can be done to prevent it. The initiative encourages students to embrace personal responsibility and take action to create safer, more supportive communities.

“We are thrilled by the overwhelming participation in this year’s challenge,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Sydnee Dickson. “Through their words and actions, these students are making a difference in their communities while helping to build a brighter, more peaceful future for all Utahns.”

As Utah’s top honoree, Abigail will represent her home state of Utah at the National Recognition Ceremony in Washington, D.C. this summer. There, Abigail will meet with members of Utah’s congressional delegation and attend a special reception. Her essay will also be published in a book housed in the Library of Congress—an honor that recognizes their role as Utah’s 2025 Ambassadors for Peace.

The DtWT Committee and the USBE Prevention Team invite junior high and middle schools across the state to participate and provide a platform for these 7th and 8th grade students to write about their experiences of youth violence and solicit students’ voices. Schools can visit the USBE Prevention Team’s DtWT website. The 2026 Challenge information will be available mid-September of each year.



Jaden Cuartelon of Sand Ridge Junior High, as seen holding the award certificate with family, is among the top three runners-up of the 2025 Do the Write Thing Challenge.



Jaden Cuartelon of Sand Ridge Junior High, as seen holding the award certificate with family, is among the top three runners-up of the 2025 Do the Write Thing Challenge.



Miriam Jensen, Roy Junior High School, pictured (left to right) with Amber Pulley Moyer, National DtWT Program Director, Utah State Board of Education Board Chair, Matt Hymas, and Utah State Superintendent Sydnee Dickson.

2025 Legislative Update - Bullying Amendments

During the 2025 General Legislative session, Senate Bill (S.B.) 223: Public Education Bullying Amendments passed the legislature. This bill amended the definition of bullying, and separated bullying into two new, distinct terms: staff bullying and student bullying.

The new definitions are as follows:

“Staff bullying” means a school employee, with the intent to cause harm, repeatedly committing a written, verbal, or physical act against a student or another school employee, or engaging in a single egregious act toward another employee involving an imbalance of power, that:

> Creates an environment that a reasonable person would find hostile, threatening, or humiliating; and
> Substantially interferes with a student's or employee's educational or professional performance, opportunities, or benefits.

“Staff bullying" **does not** include instances of:

> Ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict;
> Reasonable correction of behavior by a school employee; or
> Reasonable coaching strategies and techniques by a school employee who is a coach.

“Student bullying” means one or more students, with the intent to cause harm, repeatedly committing a written, verbal, or physical act against another student, or engaging in a single egregious act toward another student involving an imbalance of power, that:

> Creates an environment that a reasonable person would find hostile; and
> Interferes with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits.

"Student bullying" **does not** include instances of:

> Ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict;

Reasonable correction of behavior by a school employee; or
Reasonable coaching strategies and techniques by a school employee who is a coach.

Next Steps for Local Education Agencies (LEAs, aka districts and charters): USBE Prevention staff will be presenting updates to the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) Board Rule 277-613: LEA Policies and Training Regarding Bullying, Cyber-bullying, Hazing, Retaliation, and Abusive Conduct to match the new language of the statute at the June 2025 Board meeting. These changes will be discussed in a Board committee, and when approved, will be forwarded to the full board for approval. Ideally, full board approval will occur in the August board meeting. Once these changes are finalized, USBE prevention staff will send out further resources and guidance to assist LEAs in updating their bullying policies. Resources will include a new USBE model policy and other technical assistance documents. The USBE Prevention team also plans to provide professional learning regarding bullying prevention in the coming months. These offerings will be announced on the USBE Prevention website and in this newsletter when details are finalized. Please contact us at prevention@schools.utah.gov, or reach out to Becca Rae, Prevention Specialist, for further information.

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, its 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.

Trauma Sensitive Schools Courses



Through online coursework via Canvas, the 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.



Prevention Team Spotlight



This month we would like to put the spotlight on **Cathy Davis, Prevention Specialist**!

Since 2014, Cathy has been a Prevention Specialist at USBE, focusing on suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention; supporting LEAs with crisis preparedness, response, and recovery; helping with the Prevention Block Grant (including suicide prevention funding); and promoting grief literacy for adolescents.

Cathy began her career in 1994 as a science educator. She taught ecology, biology, and health sciences (medical anatomy and physiology) for over eighteen years at Murray High School. For seven of those years, she created curriculum and managed a school success program for dropout prevention in Murray School District. She was recognized as the Teacher of the Year for Murray School District in 2000. She has training in eating disorders, grief literacy, trauma-informed care, CAMS-4-Teens, and is certified by the American Association for Suicidology as a school suicide prevention specialist and certified as a Crisis Worker. Cathy is a certified QPR Trainer, Youth Mental Health First Aid Trainer, and PREPaRE (NASP) trainer. She received the 2023 Kind Remembrance Award from the University of Utah College of Nursing for her work in adolescent grief literacy in Utah schools.

Cathy received her Masters degree in School Counseling in 2005. She is currently working on the dissertation proposal for her Ph.D. in Education Leadership and Policy, focused on environmental sensitivity in school children, from the University of Utah with an anticipated graduation date of May, 2027.

Cathy expressed, “I have found Ikigai (i-key-ga-ee), my ‘life worth living’ working in suicide prevention.” She has presented extensively throughout Utah and nationally at the American School Counseling Association Conference and the

American Association of Suicidology Conference. Cathy loves spending time with family, playing the piano, hiking, and strives to be a Scrabble champion.

Cathy Davis, M.Ed.
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Phone: (801) 538-7861
Prevention Specialist - Suicide Prevention, USBE Crisis Response and Support Team, Prevention Block Grant

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May Board Meeting

Summary of Highlights

The Utah State Board of Education:

The Utah State Board of Education:

- Adopted a budget for the 2025-2026 school year.
- Selected a new Utah Fits All program manager.
- Approved a policy regarding complaints against individual board members.
- Full agenda

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

- R277-497, School Accountability System.
  This rule is being reviewed after five years and updated to include an oversight category.
- R277-331, Stipends for Future Educators
  This rule is being updated to align with House Bill (H.B,) 204.
- R277-487, Public School Data Confidentiality and Disclosure
  This rule is being amended to allow LEAs to set and achieve goals for individual privacy programs.

- R277-113, LEA Fiscal and Auditing Policies
  This rule is being updated to maintain reporting components while removing unnecessary language.
- R277-407, School Fees
  This rule is being updated as a result of legislative action.
- R277-725, Statewide Online Education Program Contractor Requirements
  This rule is being repealed after Senate Bill (S.B.) 137 changed the process for providing online services to private school students.
- R277-474, School Instruction and Sex Education (Consent Document)
  The consent form document outlines the parent consent process for sex education instruction following the passage of H.B. 281, Health Curriculum and Procedures Amendments.
- R277-474, School Instruction and Sex Education
  This rule is being updated to include a consent document following the passage of H.B. 281, Health Curriculum and Procedures Amendments.
- R277-920, School Improvement and Leadership Development
  This rule is being amended to reflect changes in state and federal law relative to school improvement programs.

See the full agenda or visit the USBE Website for more details.



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.

Positive Childhood Experiences Workshop

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 focused on Positive Childhood Experiences. The cost of the workshop is $150 + $14.30 in processing fees, which includes accommodation at Ruby's Inn, as well as breakfast and lunch. Participants can attend the UPCA Summit June 11 - 13, 2025 for an additional charge, which also covers hotel accommodations, breakfast, and lunch.

WHO: Student Services Directors, District/School Prevention Specialists, School Counselors, Administrators, Community Coalition Leaders, Community Prevention Coordinators.

WHEN: Tuesday, June 10, 2025 | 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (one day prior to the annual UPCA Summit held June 11-13, 2025)

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

ACTION: Register here for the Positive Childhood Experiences Workshop. There are multiple ticket types, so please review carefully before selecting. Due to limited availability, early registration is highly recommended.

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

K-12 Cybersecurity Practices Focus Group

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) is hosting a cybersecurity focus group to gain a deeper understanding of cybersecurity practices of Local Education Agencies (LEAs). This focus group is the first step in developing minimum cybersecurity standards for LEAs to implement per House Bill (H.B.) 40 (2025): School Safety Amendments. Please see below for more information regarding joining the K-12 Cybersecurity Practices Focus Group.

WHO: A group of 10-15 stakeholders who are involved in the Local Education Agency (LEA) cybersecurity practices and implementation at either the organization or school level, including LEA Administrators, School Administrators, and Information Technology (IT) Administrators.

WHAT: K-12 Cybersecurity Practices Focus Group, a focus group that will complete an initial K-12 Cybersecurity Practices Questionnaire, and then attend two follow-up workshops to review, discuss, and provide feedback on the proposed findings.

WHEN: Participants of the K-12 Cybersecurity Practices Focus Group will need to attend, or assign an alternative designee to attend, two workshops. Each workshop will have two options for attendance.

- Workshop 1:
  - Monday, June 23, 2025 from 10am-11am OR
  - Thursday, June 26, 2025 from 11am-12pm
- Workshop 2:
  - Monday, June 30, 2025 from 1pm-2pm OR
  - Wednesday, July 2, 2025 from 9am-10am

WHERE: Meetings will take place over Zoom. Link to be provided at a later date.

WHY: The Utah School Safety Center is working towards establishing minimum cybersecurity standards for LEAs. Please join us to share your current cybersecurity practices, as input from the field is crucial to ensure the standards are effective and practical.

NEXT STEPS: Those interested in joining the K-12 Cybersecurity Practices Focus Group should submit the K-12 Cybersecurity Practices Focus Group Interest

Form by **Friday, May 30.**
USBE will follow up and provide next steps. Thank you!

For questions, please contact Michelle Knight, (michelle.knight@schools.utah.gov) and Ashley Pistello, (ashley.pistello@schools.utah.gov).



Tanya Albornoz is the Prevention Coordinator at the Utah State Board of Education (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 Board of Education | 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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