

Prevention Newsletter

May 2026

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

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) Prevention Team upholds the Board's Mission to open doors of opportunity for all students by working 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. In collaboration with families, educators, and communities, the USBE Prevention Team aims to foster students' well-being and success across all stages of life.

Message from the Prevention Coordinator

Effective Prevention Through Proactive Planning, Part 2

Last month I revisited a concept first introduced in the December newsletter: **"If it's predictable, it's preventable."** April's article focused on how strong Tier 1 systemic practices can ease transitions and prevent predictable challenges when students return in the fall. This month, I would like to build on that idea by focusing on how **"proactive planning" supports continuity and predictability** for individual students as the school year ends.

While Tier 1 supports all students, effective prevention also depends on how well schools **document and transfer knowledge about individual needs**. Too often, important information is lost during transitions, leading to frustration, behavioral escalation, and delays in support. **Intentional documentation of what works** can make a meaningful difference as students move to a new grade and teacher. Having clear, concise records of the interventions, strategies, and supports that have been effective can make a meaningful difference right from the start.

In an effective Multi Tiered System of Supports, **documentation is a prevention tool, not a compliance task**. Clear, accurate, and accessible

documentation allows teams to respond quickly and appropriately to student needs without having to start over each fall. When successful interventions and instructional strategies are clearly documented, receiving teachers can build on existing progress rather than spending weeks rediscovering what students need to be successful.

This continuity is especially critical for students receiving additional academic or behavioral support. Small gaps or inconsistencies at the start of the year that occur when supports are interrupted or changed can lead to frustration or regression in students. Often, behaviors that escalate early in the year reflect predictable, unmet needs rather than new concerns. Again remember, **"If it's predictable, it's preventable."**

Documenting **which interventions were used, how consistently they were implemented, and how the student responded** helps ensure that support continues seamlessly. Maintaining intervention plans, progress monitoring data, and team notes keeps decisions data informed and student centered.

Transition meetings further strengthen prevention efforts. Instead of just passing along files or notes, bringing together current teachers, receiving teachers, and support staff allows teams to share insight, identify effective strategies, and anticipate challenges before they arise. These conversations promote shared responsibility and help ensure interventions are implemented consistently.

Effective transition conversations often focus on a few key questions:

- **Which strategies or interventions have been most effective for this student?**
- **What conditions or instructional approaches appear to support the student's success?**
- **What should the receiving team prioritize during the first weeks of school?**

When documentation and transition planning are prioritized, schools move from reacting to behavior to preventing it through continuity and intentional planning. More importantly, students experience greater stability and support during times of change.

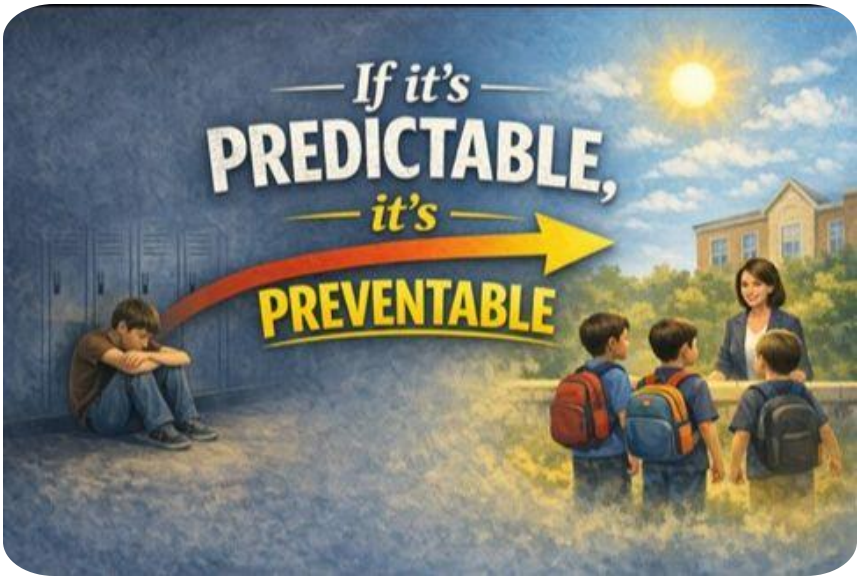
Once again I would like to reiterate that at its core, "proactive planning" reflects the simple principle of **"If it's predictable, it's preventable." By recognizing**

patterns, documenting effective practices, anticipating student needs, and planning ahead for transitions, schools can reduce avoidable challenges and ensure a stronger start to the next school year. **Schools can shift from responding to behavior after it occurs to preventing it before it begins.** These practices reflect a prevention focused mindset and reinforces a shared belief that systems, not students, should do the heavy lifting.

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 strengthens and improves child and family well-being by reducing risks and promoting positive outcomes, even amid adversity. It guides education staff to focus on five key attributes that help reduce student risk, enhance well-being, and support student success. Information about Protective Factors will be highlighted each month. This month's focus is on the **application of the protective factor work with students**.



From Framework to Individual Student Support

The Protective Factor Framework is most powerful when it moves beyond theory and is intentionally applied to support individual students. Research shows that strengthening protective factors can improve outcomes and buffer the effects of adversity, but the impact is better realized when educators use this lens to understand each student's unique strengths and needs. **Applying the framework at the individual level allows educators to shift from simply responding to behaviors to understanding what may be driving them.** It provides a structured way to identify strengths, uncover gaps, and select meaningful supports that promote both well-being and academic success.

Applying the Protective Factor Lens
When working with a student, consider the following guiding questions as part of your problem-solving and support process:

- **What protective factors are present and functioning as strengths for this student?**
  Every student brings strengths. Identifying existing protective factors, such as a strong relationship with a trusted adult, positive peer connections, or well-developed coping skills, helps build on what is already working.

- **Which protective factors need to be further developed to support this student's success?**
  Students may have emerging strengths that need additional support. For example, a student may demonstrate effort but lack consistent strategies for managing frustration. Targeted support can help strengthen these developing areas.

- **Which protective factors present challenges or are currently lacking?**
  When a protective factor is underdeveloped or absent, it can create barriers to learning and prosocial behavior. A lack of stable relationships, limited access to basic needs, or underdeveloped emotional or social skills may contribute to the challenges educators observe in the classroom.

- **Which specific protective factor might help improve the student's overall academic performance or behavior?**
  Protective factors are closely connected to both engagement and academic achievement. For example, increasing a student's sense of belonging may improve attendance and participation, while building emotional regulation skills may reduce behavioral incidents and increase time spent engaged in learning. By identifying the underlying protective factors connected to a student's needs, educators can align interventions that address root causes rather than surface level symptoms.

- **How can we effectively communicate to teachers and others which protective factors the student needs to strengthen?**
  Educating others about the framework helps create shared vision and understanding about student needs. Using a common language around protective factors helps teams align their efforts. Clearly describing both the strengths and needs of the student allows teachers, support staff, and administrators to implement consistent and coordinated strategies across settings. Ultimately, creating systems and processes that communicate protective factor needs is a worthwhile activity within school systems.

- **How can we engage families in strengthening protective factors?**
  Families play a critical role in building protective factors. Engaging families as partners includes: sharing strengths as well as areas for growth; providing simple, actionable strategies that can be reinforced at home; and communicating in a way that is respectful, collaborative, and culturally responsive. When families and schools work together, protective factors can be strengthened across environments, creating more consistent support for the student.

Why It Matters

Applying the Protective Factor Framework at the individual level helps educators move from **reaction to intention**. It shifts the focus from "What is wrong with the student?" to **"What strengths exist, and what supports are needed?"** This approach fosters more effective, compassionate, and targeted support for students.

Reflection

Think about a student you are currently supporting. Which protective factors are strengths, and which may need intentional growth?

For more information about Protective Factors, please visit the USBE Prevention webpage.



Prevention Updates & Information

Mental Health Awareness Month: A Call to Action for Prevention Specialists

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to elevate mental well being, reduce stigma, and strengthen support across our schools and communities. Mental health is foundational to learning, relationships, and resilience and prevention specialists play a critical role in helping students, staff, and families feel supported and connected.

This month is an opportunity to move awareness into action. Consider how you can support mental health across your sphere of influence:

For students

- Promote coping skills, help seeking, and protective factors
- Normalize conversations about emotions and stress
- Share trusted resources and remind students they are not alone

For staff

- Encourage self care and peer support
- Reinforce that mental health challenges are common and support is available
- Model compassionate, stigma free language

For families and communities

- Share mental health education and resources
- Encourage early support - not just crisis response
- Foster connection, belonging, and open dialogue

Mental Health Awareness Month reminds us that struggling does not mean failing - and that support can make a meaningful difference when offered early and consistently. When we reduce stigma and increase access to help, we strengthen resilience and save lives.

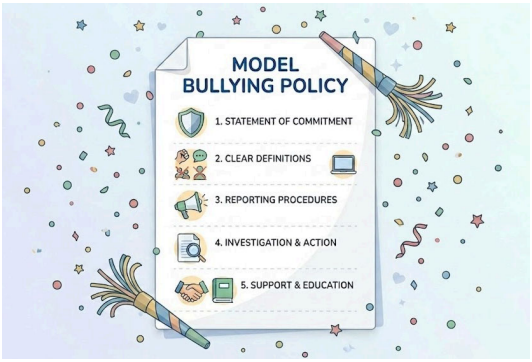
Utah Specific Support

SafeUT: Free, confidential chat and call support with licensed counselors for students, parents, and educators - available 24/7.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988, or chat at 988lifeline.org, for emotional support anytime. You don’t have to wait for a crisis to reach out.

Together, prevention specialists can help create school and community environments where mental health is prioritized, support is visible, and hope is always within reach.

Announcing the New USBE Model Bullying Policy



We are celebrating! After several years of thoughtful development and ongoing refinement to align with legislative updates, the Local Education Agency (LEA) Bullying Model Policy is now complete.

This milestone reflects a strong commitment to supporting safe and respectful school environments across Utah. We extend our sincere gratitude to the many partners who contributed their time, expertise, and feedback to make this work possible.

The new model policy incorporates all legislative and Board Rule updates through January 2026, providing LEAs with a current and comprehensive foundation. LEAs are encouraged to adapt this model to reflect their unique local context while ensuring all legal requirements are fully met.

This achievement also marks the beginning of expanded support for bullying prevention efforts statewide. In the coming months, additional resources will be released, including model forms and training materials designed to strengthen implementation and maximize impact.

For more information, please contact Becca Rae (becca.rae@schools.utah.gov), *USBE Bullying Prevention and Behavior Support Specialist*.

National Prevention Week: A Time to Celebrate Utah's Prevention Efforts

National Prevention Week (May 10–16, 2026) is a time to recognize the many ways prevention is already happening in schools and districts across Utah. Much of this work is woven into daily practices that support student connection, skill building, and well being.

At the March comprehensive prevention plan workshops, we had the

opportunity to hear directly from schools and districts across the state and learn about the prevention efforts already underway. Schools shared examples of intentionally fostering positive school climates where educators know their students and make it clear they care. Many are teaching communication and problem solving skills, providing Check & Connect mentors, and connecting families to resources when needs arise. All of which are strategies that strongly reflect comprehensive, proactive prevention planning.

Strong collaboration between schools and community coalitions continues to be a key strength. Examples include hosting family reading nights that emphasize connection, partnering to promote attendance, coordinating "foster grandparents" to support reading during the school day, and providing expert support for required parent seminars on student protection. In addition, many schools have partnered with local coalitions to display *Parents Empowered* underage drinking prevention messaging on campus.

As we highlight National Prevention Week, we encourage schools and districts to take time to recognize and build on the amazing prevention efforts already in place.



The Hidden Danger in Our Students' Pockets: AI Chatbots, Grooming, and Exploitation

As professionals in Utah schools, we are constantly watching social media and general internet use for any signs of bullying or distress.

But there's a new, fast-moving, and largely hidden threat quietly showing up on our students' devices: the rise of AI companion chatbots. Recent reporting from various news sources show the disturbing fact that adolescents are forming deep, dependent emotional attachments to AI models like Character.AI, Replika, or even ChatGPT. Even though these might start out being used for schoolwork or just casual conversation, these bots are built specifically to mimic human empathy and maintain long-term connections. Additionally, it has been

demonstrated that conversations with these chatbots can rapidly turn very inappropriate and sexually explicit. The tragic result is what experts are calling "AI psychosis," where teens start losing touch with reality. Since these AI companions are designed to always agree with the user, they can easily trap vulnerable young people in dangerous echo chambers. This actively stunts their social development and, in several recent legal cases, has been linked to encouraging severe mental health crises, self-harm, and even suicide.

Beyond these deep psychological dangers, AI tools are quickly becoming a weapon used by predators to make child sexual abuse and human trafficking easier. Generative AI has made online exploitation much simpler, changing grooming from a slow, one-on-one effort into a highly automated and scalable threat. Traffickers are now using AI chatbots to run multiple grooming conversations at once, using models that are programmed to sound exactly like a real teen to build trust and isolate children. On top of that, predators can now use easily accessible AI generators to create frighteningly realistic, non-consensual Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) and deepfakes to blackmail minors. AI is also being used to create fake job postings and phony employer profiles, which are sophisticated new traps for trafficking recruitment. Our students are no longer just interacting with algorithms, they are highly susceptible to targeted exploitation driven by artificial intelligence.

Our Proactive Response: Building Protective Factors

Preventing these tragedies requires a unified, proactive response rooted in strong protective factors across all school communities. Schools can support students by incorporating the following safeguards into our prevention work:

- **Digital Safety:** We must explicitly teach our students to approach AI with a healthy dose of skepticism. They need to understand that chatbots are not true friends and are definitely not a safe replacement for human connection or licensed professional help.
- **Strengthening Adult Connections:** Educators and counselors must continue to have open, non-judgmental conversations with students about the dangers of seeking companionship from a bot. We should all be watching closely for warning signs like withdrawing from real-world relationships or having an intense emotional attachment to their devices.
- **Partnering with Parents on Boundaries:** We absolutely must work closely with parents to push for key safeguards like platform-specific boundaries, strict screen-time limits, and the use of teen-restricted accounts.

By staying educated on the dual threats of AI and automated grooming, we can intervene early and protect our students from these rapidly evolving digital dangers.

Resources:

- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program
- Utah State Board of Education: Welcome to Artificial Intelligence

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Utah
Do The Write Thing

Utah Students Take A Stand Against Youth Violence at 25th Annual "Do the Write Thing" Award Ceremony



Figure 1: Andre Ramos of Roy Junior High, named as the 2026 Utah Do the Write Thing Challenge's Ambassador for Peace.

On Friday, May 1, 2026, USBE proudly hosted the 25th annual Do the Write Thing (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 Andre Ramos, of Roy Junior High, was named Utah's distinguished finalist or "Ambassador for Peace," for the 2026 year. Andre was awarded a $500 scholarship, along with a summer trip to Washington D.C. to speak with policy makers regarding youth violence.

Andre wrote: "*It is crucial to bring light to any effort no matter how miserable the moment may seem. Be the one who is there when it is in need. Be the one that someone can look back delightfully upon and to appreciate the stability, security, and significance that you have given them to grow and become the person that they are or are striving to be.*"

In addition, three students were recognized as runners-ups; they include: Malachi Murrah and Adele Noorda of Roy Junior High, and Amanda Mariano of Summit Academy Independence. They each received a $400 scholarship as an award. Twenty additional students were also named as state finalists and each received a $300 scholarship. Collectively, the DtWT Committee awarded $8,000 in scholarships to these students.

From the challenge, emerged an inspiring group of students from 13 schools across Utah. Nineteen teachers reported that over 2,000 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. 261 students submitted writings about youth violence for review.

The DtWT 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.

The 2026 DtWT Student Writings booklet containing 24 finalists' writing, is now available. The 2027 DtWT Challenge will be available mid-September. Please

encourage 7th and 8th grade English teachers, along with other interested educators, to participate. Schools and teachers who are interested can visit Utah's DtWT Challenge webpage for more information.



Prevention Funding

Child Sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking Prevention (CSA/HT) Alternative Provider Choice Grant

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) is pleased to announce that the application deadline for the Child Sexual Abuse/Human Trafficking (CSA/HT) Alternative Provider Choice Grant has again been extended to **May 29, 2026**.

This grant is intended **only** to support CSA/HT prevention training for **elementary students**. Training for parents/guardians and adults serving youth is not eligible for these funds.

Prevent Child Abuse Utah (PCAU) is the state's preferred provider and is contracted to deliver CSA/HT prevention instruction to elementary students free of charge to local education agencies (LEAs). Therefore, grant funds are not intended to support PCAU-employed trainers delivering classroom presentations to elementary students.

Awarded funds may be used for the following:

- Instructional materials for students in grades K-6.

- Paying stipends for educators to become trainers or to provide approved instructional materials to students.
- Paying an organization to provide approved materials to students.
- Costs for printing or other materials needed to provide the instruction.
- Travel costs for staff providing instruction to students.
- Costs for online training materials (if approved by USBE).

Awarded funds may **NOT** be used for the following:

- Food or other incentives for student participation.
- Assemblies.
- Computer equipment.
- Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions to provide the instruction or benefits for an FTE.

Interested LEAs can apply for this grant in the Utah Grants Management System.

If you have questions regarding the program, instructional material approval, or the grant process, please contact Mindy Elliott (mindy.elliott@schools.utah.gov), *Prevention Specialist*, or Tina Morandy (tina.morandy@schools.utah.gov), *Executive Secretary*.



Prevention Stars

This month, we are thrilled to celebrate not one, not two, but FIVE incredible Prevention Stars. We are excited to honor the following individuals as the Prevention Stars for May 2026.

These outstanding professionals were nominated by Britta Watts, Coalition Coordinator for the MyKearns Community Coalition and Health Educator with the Salt Lake County Health Department. Britta shared her deep appreciation for each of these individuals and the meaningful impact they are making as site coordinators at their schools through Project Creating Resilient and Engaged Student Teams (CREST).

Project CREST, a dynamic partnership between Utah State University Extension and the Salt Lake County Health Department, is dedicated to strengthening emotional support and promoting mental wellness for students and families. Through a focus on community-driven health and resilience, this work is creating lasting, positive change. Thanks to the leadership and commitment of these site coordinators, prevention education has expanded and family engagement has grown stronger across their school communities.

Please join us in celebrating these five exceptional professionals. Your passion, dedication, and unwavering commitment to prevention are making a powerful difference for students and families every day. Congratulations, and thank you for the incredible work you do.



Amanda Cornwell

Resource Teacher (12 years)



Jennifer Stone

School Social Worker (10 years)

David Gourley Elementary
Granite School District

Lincoln Elementary
Granite School District





Melinda Riggs
School Social Worker (9 years)
William Penn Elementary
Granite School District

Michelle Bouwman
School Social Worker (9 years)
Liberty Elementary
Murray School District

NOT PICTURED

Susan Wright
Assistant Principal
Horizon Elementary
Murray School District

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



Dr. Leah Voorhies

This month we would like to put the spotlight on **Leah Voorhies, Ph.D.**, who works at USBE as the **Deputy Superintendent of Student Achievement**.

Dr. Voorhies has three decades of association with USBE, starting with the Utah

Schools for the Deaf and the Blind in 1996 and then came to USBE in 2010. Dr. Voorhies is a licensed school psychologist. She earned a bachelor's degree in sociology, a master's degree in school psychology, and a doctorate degree in counseling psychology, all from Brigham Young University and then an Educational Administration certificate from Utah State University.

She was the elected Utah delegate to the National Association of School Psychologist's leadership assembly for three years; and is currently the President Elect of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education. She loves to read, with both her eyes and her ears, and entertain her 5 million nieces and nephews.



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 TRP.

Remember to put the following dates on your calendars.

2025-2026 Prevention and Student Services Webinar Series

May brings our final webinar of the 2025-2026 school year, which will discuss the Check & Connect Mentoring Program and other effective strategies to improve student attendance. This session will highlight how mentoring relationships can support engagement and long-term academic success.

Protective Factor Focus: Concrete Supports; Social Connections; Emotional and Social Competence

WHO: School administrators, prevention staff, behavior specialists, school counselors, social workers, teachers, school mentors, and other staff who work directly with students and have an interest in prevention topics.

WHEN: Thursday, May 21, 2026 | 12:00 p.m.
Check & Connect Mentoring / Attendance

WHERE: Virtual Zoom meeting

ACTION: Register for the combined webinars via Zoom

INFORMATION: Reach out to prevention@schools.utah.gov or visit the USBE Prevention Professional Learning webpage for more information, including recordings and materials from past webinars.

Last month's webinar discussed behavioral basics, including why challenging behaviors happen, how they are reinforced, and how to implement effective behavior strategies. Practical, evidence-based intervention strategies were discussed, and attendees learned how to match the strategies with individual student needs. We also added a bonus webinar in April that highlighted key state data results from the 2025 administration of the Utah Student Health and Risk Prevention (SHARP) survey and explored ways these results could be used to guide prevention priorities and planning.

As always, if you missed any of the webinars or want to re-watch or share them, you can find recordings and materials from past webinars on the USBE Prevention Professional Learning webpage.

Also, if you have suggestions for future webinars, please contact us at prevention@schools.utah.gov.

The Power of Connection: Enhancing Positive Childhood Experiences through Social Connections

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. This collaborative workshop will focus on actionable strategies to strengthen Positive Childhood Experiences through social connection-an approach that supports healthier, safer communities and helps young people thrive in school and beyond. 5.5 relicensure hours will be offered.

Registration is $160 plus Whova platform fees and includes a one-night hotel stay at Ruby's Inn on the night of June 8, as well as breakfast and lunch on June 9. Registration for those who do not need a hotel stay is $29.00 plus Whova platform fees.

WHO: School and district personnel, community coalition members, community prevention coordinators

WHEN: Tuesday, June 9, 2025 | 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
(One day prior to the annual UPCA Summit held June 10-12, 2026)

WHERE: Best Western Plus-Ruby's Inn
26 South Main Street
Bryce Canyon City, UT 84764

ACTION: Please note that registration was originally scheduled to close on May 8; however, it has been reopened and will remain open until capacity is reached. Participants may continue to register after June 1, but will be responsible for securing their own accommodations with Ruby's Inn or nearby hotels. Register via Whova

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

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



Join Us at the 4th Annual Utah School Safety Center Conference!

Get ready for the 4th annual Utah School Safety Center Conference on **June 10-11, 2026, at Draper Park Middle School in Draper, UT**. This must-attend event for school safety enthusiasts offers the latest best practices in mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. Don't miss the chance to learn, connect, and make a difference.

Registration for the conference is now open for K-12 leaders to gain insights from both nationally recognized speakers and local role models and acquire comprehensive school safety programs.

No-Cost Training Opportunity: Caring Connections Teen Grief Support Program

WHAT: The Caring Connections Teen Grief Support Program is an eight-session, evidence-informed grief support group designed specifically for high school students who have experienced the death of a parent, family member, or someone close to them. The program addresses the unique developmental needs of adolescents navigating grief.

The program is not a clinical intervention, is not a restrictive service, and does not need to be facilitated by licensed clinicians. An all-day training is available for school counselors and social workers to learn how to implement the model with students. Caring Connections is part of the University of Utah College of Nursing.

WHO: The Teen Grief Support Program is designed for high school students and can be facilitated by school counselors, school social workers, or school psychologists.

WHEN: Training is offered throughout the year and can be scheduled at a time that works best for your LEA.

WHERE: Training is delivered on-site within Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and is designed to support implementation of the program in high schools. The model can also be used by other professionals in the community.

ACTION: LEAs interested in hosting a training should contact Laura Bradbury (laura.bradbury@nurs.utah.edu), to schedule a session for LEA personnel.

INFORMATION: By the end of high school, approximately 5% of students will have lost a parent, and nearly 20% will have experienced the death of someone close by age 18. Because adolescents are "nearly, but not yet, adults," they face distinct emotional and developmental challenges when coping with loss. In response to this need, Caring Connections developed this structured, eight-session grief support model for teens. Training is offered to LEAs at no cost, and all materials are provided.



Save the Date!
2026 Behavior Support and Prevention Summit

WHAT: USBE's Behavior Support and Prevention teams are excited to sponsor a 2-day Behavior Solutions Customized Workshop. This training, based on the work of Dr. John Hannigan and colleagues, will provide a framework for establishing and implementing proactive, tiered behavior supports. This approach is designed to bridge the gap between academic and social behavior instruction through a systematic structure. This workshop will move learning beyond theoretical concepts to build effective interventions that reduce

classroom disruption. Participants will leave with a customized framework for their school. **This is a free workshop and will be provided at no costs for participants.**

WHO: This training is designed for educators at all levels. School teams (teachers, administrators, related service providers, etc.) are encouraged to attend together in order to facilitate framework development.

WHEN: September 24-25, 2026 | 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

WHERE: Utah Valley Convention Center (220 W Center St, Provo, UT 84601)

ACTION: Watch for registration information coming soon!

INFORMATION: For more information, contact Krisanne Lewis (krisanne.lewis@schools.utah.gov) or Tanya Albornoz (tanya.albornoz@schools.utah.gov).

May Board Meeting

Summary of Highlights

The Utah State Board of Education:

- Adopted the State Fiscal Year 2027 Public Education Budget.
- Approved the Lincoln Academy Waiver Request.
- Approved the American Preparatory Academy-Eagle Mountain Satellite Waiver Request.
- Approved the FY2026 National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grant.

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

- R277-320. Grow Your Own Teacher and School Counselor Pipeline Program
  This rule is being amended to clarify that only apprentices qualify for four semesters of FTE assistance and update mentor stipend language per House Bill (H.B.) 163 (2026) and Senate Bill (S.B.) 34 (2026), while also recommending the continuation of R277-320 prior to its July 20, 2026 expiration.
- R277-406. Early Learning Program and Assessments
  Following the passage of H.B. 312 (2026) and the subsequent repeal of early learning plans, staff recommends amending R277-406 to clarify the USBE's role in designating and funding statewide math assessments and to update the definition of "reading at grade level."
- R277-488. Dual Language Immersion Program
  This rule is being amended to reduce the number of endorsements as requested by the Board, eliminate the Dual Language Immersion Endorsement, and ensure the continuation of R277-488 ahead of its August 19, 2026, expiration date.
- R277-607. Absenteeism and Truancy Prevention
  This rule is being reviewed prior to its five-year review. Action must be taken by the Committee to ensure USBE meets the upcoming Office of Administrative Rules filing deadline. This continuation does not include the policy changes from the 2026 legislative session.
- R277-727. School Meals Program
  This rule is recommended for continuation to ensure that the rule does not expire on June 24, 2026.
- R277-731. Catalyst Center Grant Program Policy
  This rule is being amended to rename the Catalyst Center Grant Program to "The Applied Educational Experience Grant Program," update eligibility and fund usage provisions, and align code references with the requirements of S.B. 34 (2026).
- R277-925. Effective Teachers in High Poverty Schools Incentive Program
  While additional one-time funding was allocated during the 2026 Legislative session, no changes were made to the program. Staff are recommending continuation of the rule to ensure that the rule does not expire.

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.

tanya.albornoz@schools.utah.gov
(801) 538-7812



Prevention Team, pictured from left to right: Clarissa Stebbing, Michelle Knight, Cuong Nguyen, Tanya Albornoz, Tina Morandy, and Mindy Elliott.

Utah State Board of Education | Prevention

Contact Us

Meet the Prevention Team

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

250 East 500 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

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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