

Utah: Major Education Initiatives (1999-2009) and Statistics

Prepared for the House Education Committee, Chairman Harry Brooks

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Over the past decade, Utah, like most states, has implemented policy changes in several key areas, including standards, assessments, and accountability. In 2003, the Utah State Legislature passed legislation directing the Utah Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to: 1) focus on core curriculum; 2) increase graduation requirements; 3) ensure that high school seniors are progressing in challenging courses; and 4) implement competency standards for progress and graduation. Utah's Performance Plus is a competency-based achievement plan. The first phase of the plan, K-3 Grade Reading Improvement, was launched in Utah's schools in fall 2004.

Outlined below are some of the states major education initiatives since 1999:

Academic Standards and Testing

The 1998 Utah State Legislature mandated that all students receiving a basic Utah high school diploma must pass the Utah Basic Skills Competency Test (UBSCT), beginning with the graduating class of 2006. Students are given five opportunities to pass the test between the spring of their sophomore year and the spring of their senior year. The graduating class of 2009, after three opportunities to take the UBSCT, has passing percentages of 90.86 percent in reading, 81.06 percent in math and 86.50 percent in writing.

In 2006, the Utah State Board of Education increased graduation requirements to ensure greater rigor in schools and ability in their graduates, beginning with the graduating class of 2011. A variety of rigorous classes (including many career and technology courses) that are aligned to language arts, math, and science core curricula can be applied to meet these new expectations.

Accountability System

In 2000, the Utah State Legislature enacted the Utah Performance Assessment System for Students (U-PASS) as Utah's accountability plan. U-PASS calls for multiple lines of evidence in assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of programs in public and charter schools. The U-PASS requires both *norm-referenced* and *criterion-referenced* tests for students in most grades; writing assessments for students in grades 6 and 9; and a 10th-grade basic skills competency test. Criterion-referenced tests are administered at all grade levels and courses in basic skills areas of the core curriculum; a direct writing assessment is given to all students in grades 6 and 9; norm-referenced tests are given in 3, 5, 8 and 11.

U-PASS information may be used to recognize excellence and to identify the need for additional resources to assure educational opportunities for all students. The U-PASS Accountability Plan is a growth plan that identifies every student in the state as either having "Achieved the State Level of Performance" or "Needs Assistance." This accountability plan uses multiple assessments and indicators. There is an expectation of individual progress for each student. Each U-PASS school report will show the status and progress for the total school and the subgroup.

The U.S. Department of Education does not recognize Utah's U-PASS system as its only system for accountability; therefore, Utah now maintains a dual accountability system, using both the state accountability system of U-PASS and the federal accountability system of NCLB. The Utah Legislature has directed Utah schools to use U-PASS as their primary accountability system and NCLB as their secondary accountability system. NCLB continues to identify schools that the federal government claims are in need of improvement in its expectation of 100 percent proficiency for all children by 2013-14. Flexibility in NCLB has yet to be specifically approved in Utah.

Virtual Education

Utah offers on-line education via The Electronic High School (EHS), which has been in operation since 1994 and provides a wide variety of courses for thousands of students in Utah and throughout the world. It is fully accredited by the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools. Utah teachers developed the curriculum to match the Utah State Core Curriculum with a flexible, open-entry/open-exit competency-based curriculum. EHS, which is managed by the Utah State Office of Education, is one of the largest online high schools in the United States. It serves five major groups of students:

1. Students needing to make up credit
2. Students who wish to take a class not available at their local school
3. Students who wish to earn additional credits to accelerate graduation
4. Students who have dropped out of school and whose class has already graduated
5. Home-schooled students

Some of the EHS administrative positions are funded through the Utah State Office of Education's general fund budget, while the majority of funding comes from a \$2 million line-item in the state budget. EHS courses are free to Utah students.

Curriculum and Instructional Reform

A major focus of Utah's curriculum reforms over the past decade has been on improving reading instruction. In 2004, the Utah legislature enacted a bill creating the K-3 Reading Improvement Program. Under this law, the state provides matching funds to help districts and charter schools achieve Utah's goal of having third graders read at or above grade level. Each school district and charter school must use program monies to improve reading proficiency in kindergarten through grade three and must annually report its progress to the state.

Information compiled from the Utah Foundation, the Utah State Office of Education, the Utah State Board of Education, and Education Commission of States (ECS).

Utah: Vital Education Statistics

Overall

Education Enrollment and Attainment		UT	TN	US
Preschool Enrollment	Percent of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool (2007)	38.2%	37.4%	46.2%
Kindergarten Enrollment	Percent of eligible children enrolled in kindergarten programs (2007)	78.0%	75.4%	76.4%
High School Graduation	Percent of public high school students who graduate with a diploma (2005)	78.6%	65.4%	70.6%
Young Adult Education	Percent of young adults (18-24) enrolled in postsecondary education or with a degree (2007)	50.3%	45.7%	52.8%
Adult Educational Attainment	Percent of adults (25-64) with a 2- or 4-year postsecondary degree (2007)	39.7%	30.1%	37.7%

Source: Education Week, *Quality Counts 2009*, Chance for Success Index, <http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/qc/2009/17sos.h28.chance.pdf>

Students

Student Demographics	UT (08-09)	TN (07-08)
Total	551,013	929,543
% White	79.0	68.8
% Black / African American	1.4	24.6
% Hispanic	14.4	4.8
% Asian / Pacific Islander	3.3	1.6
% Indian / Native American / Alaskan	1.4	0.2
% Multiracial	0.5	n/a
% Disabled	13.2*	14.7
% Eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch	32.3*	54.5
% ELL	9.8*	3.2
% Female	48.7	48.5
% Male	51.3	51.5

* Note: Information from 2005-06 school year

Sources: Utah State Office of Education, 2009 Fingertip Facts Public Education, 2008-09 Public School Enrollment Demographics, <http://www.schools.utah.gov/default/FngrFacts.pdf>; U.S. Department of Education, Mapping Utah's Educational Progress 2008, http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/3c/84/88.pdf; Tennessee Department of Education, 2008 Report Card, State Profile, <http://edu.reportcard.state.tn.us/pls/apex/f?p=200:1:3464209647625034>

Teachers

K-12 Classroom Teachers (2007-08)	UT	TN	US
# of Teachers	22,516	62,282	3,184,994
Students Enrolled per Teacher	21.6	14.5	15.4
Average Salary	\$41,615	\$45,030	\$52,308

Source: National Education Association, *Rankings & Estimates: Rankings of the States 2008 and Estimates of School Statistics 2009*, Series C – Faculty, <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/09rankings.pdf>

The Teaching Profession (2008) – Condensed		UT	TN	US (# of states)
Grade	Grade	C-	C	C
	Total Score	71.8	75.1	
ACCOUNTABILITY FOR QUALITY				
Initial Licensure Requirements for All Prospective Teachers (2007-08)				
State requires substantial formal coursework in subject area(s) taught			✓	27
Prospective teachers must pass written tests	Basic skills		✓	39
	Subject-specific knowledge	✓	✓	42
	Subject-specific pedagogy			6
State requires clinical experiences during teacher training	Student teaching (weeks)	--	15	39
	Other clinical experiences (hours)	--	--	13
Evaluation of Teacher Performance (2007-08)				
Teacher evaluation occurs on an annual basis			✓	12
State requires evaluators to receive formal training			✓	26
INCENTIVES & ALLOCATION				
Teacher Salaries				
Pay Parity - teacher earnings as a percentage of salaries in comparable occupations (2006)		86.7%	85.1%	10*
Incentives for Teacher Leadership and Performance (2007-08)				
State provides incentives or rewards to teachers taking on leadership roles			✓	17
Monitoring the Distribution of Teaching Talent (2007-08)				
State maintains information about the numbers of teachers by school-poverty level for particular categories of teachers	Fully licensed teachers	✓	✓	42
	Highly qualified teachers	✓		31
	First-year teachers	✓	✓	35
	National board certified teachers	✓	✓	25
Managing the Allocation of Talent (2007-08)				
State provides incentives to teachers who work in targeted assignments	Targeted schools			20
	Targeted teaching-assignment areas	✓		16
BUILDING AND SUPPORTING CAPACITY				
Supports for Beginning Teachers (2007-08)				
All new teachers are required to participate in a state-funded induction program		✓		22
Mentoring programs for all beginning teachers	All new teachers are required to participate in a state-funded mentoring program	✓		25
	State has standards for selecting, training, and/or matching mentors	✓		20
Professional Development (2007-08)				
State finances professional development for all districts		✓		24

State requires districts/schools to set aside time for professional development		✓	16
School Leadership (2006)			
State requirements for initial administrator licensure	Supervised internship	✓	28
	Participation in induction or mentoring program		14
School Working Conditions			
State has implemented a class-size-reduction program or regulations to limit class size (2007-08)		✓	21
Median student-teacher ratio in primary-level schools (2005)	20.3	15.2	26 (median is 15:1 or less)
State tracks condition of all school facilities (2007-08)		✓	22

*Note: Teacher salaries at least equal to comparable occupations (2006)

Source: Education Week, *Quality Counts 2009*, The Teaching Profession (2008), http://www.edweek.org/apps/gc2009/state_compare.html

K-12 Structure

Utah has 40 school districts. As of 2008-09, Utah had approximately 804 public schools, including 66 charter schools, and six virtual schools.

Utah's K-12 Governance Structure

Governor	The governor does not appoint any of the voting members of the state board of education nor the chief state school officer. However, the governor does select two candidates for the election of each seat on the state board of education.
Chief State School Officer	The chief state school officer is appointed by the state board of education, and is referred to as the state superintendent of public instruction.
State Board of Education	There are 15 voting members of the state board of education. All of the voting members are elected. There are no ex-officio and/or non-voting members.
Local School Boards	There are 40 local school boards. Local school board members are elected.
Local Superintendents	There are 40 local superintendents. Local superintendents are appointed by local school boards.

Sources: Utah State Office of Education, 2009 Fingertip Facts Public Education, Public Schools by Grade Level, 2008-09, <http://www.schools.utah.gov/default/FngtFacts.pdf>; Education Commission of the States, Governance, K-12 Governance Structures Database, http://www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/educationissues/governance/govk12db_intro.asp

K-12 Achievement

K-12 Achievement (2008)		UT	TN	US
STATE ACHIEVEMENT INDEX	Grade	C-	D+	D+
	Total Score	69.9	67.0	69.4
ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL				
NAEP Mathematics 2007 Percent Proficient	4th Grade	39.4%	28.7%	38.6%
	8th Grade	32.4%	23.1%	31.0%
NAEP Reading 2007 Percent Proficient	4th Grade	33.9%	26.9%	31.7%
	8th Grade	30.1%	25.6%	29.2%
ACHIEVEMENT GAINS				
NAEP Math Scale Score Change 2003 to 2007	4th Grade	+4.6	+5.0	+5.1
	8th Grade	+0.4	+5.8	+4.1

NAEP Reading Scale Score Change 2003 to 2007	4th Grade	+2.0	+3.8	+3.2
	8th Grade	-2.1	+1.1	-0.3
POVERTY GAP				
National School Lunch Program Non-Eligible vs. Eligible 2007	Reading 4th Grade NAEP Scale Score	20.5	26.7	26.8
	Math 8th Grade NAEP Scale Score	19.5	22.2	26.0
Poverty-Gap Change 2003 to 2007 (negative value = narrowing gap)	Reading 4th Grade NAEP Scale Score	+0.4	+2.4	-1.1
	Math 8th Grade NAEP Scale Score	-0.4	-6.4	-2.4
ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE				
NAEP Math 2007 Percent Advanced	8th grade	6.1%	3.8%	6.6%
NAEP Math Percent Advanced Change 2003 to 2007	8th grade	+0.4%	+0.8%	+1.6%
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION				
Graduation Rates (All Students, Public Schools)	2004	83.8%	72.2%	69.9%
	Change 2000 to 2004	+4.5%	+14.7%	+3.1%
ADVANCED PLACEMENT				
High Test Scores (3 or Above) Per 100 Students in Grades 11 and 12 (Public Schools)	2007	21.0	8.7	16.9
	Change 2000 to 2007	+3.5	+2.9	+6.0

Source: Education Week, *Quality Counts 2009*, K-12 Achievement Index (2008), http://www.edweek.org/apps/qc2009/state_compare.html

Additional K-12 Achievement Indicators	UT	TN	US
Projection of Graduates and Nongraduates			
9th grade enrollment 2004-2005	37,352	80,890	4,176,954
Projected graduates 2007-2008	29,367	52,908	2,947,677
Projected nongraduates 2007-2008	7,985	27,982	1,229,277
Total students lost each school day	44	155	6,829
ACT			
2008 Results (Mean Score)	21.8	20.7	21.1
# of 2008 Test Takers	22,598	50,225	1,421,941
SAT			
2008 Results (Mean Score)	1661	1707	1511
# of 2008 Test Takers	1,930	6,272	1,518,859

Sources: Education Week, *Diploma Counts 2008*, U.S. Public High Schools Losing 6,829 Students Per Day, <http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/dc/2008/40projections.h27.pdf>; American College Testing, ACT National and State Scores for 2008, <http://www.act.org/news/data/08/states.html>; College Board, SAT Data and Results, College Bound Seniors 2008, <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/data-reports-research/sat/cb-seniors-2008>

Truth in Advertising about Student Proficiency = D

Utah gets lower than average marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified large percentages of its students as proficient on 2005 state math and reading exams, smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

Source U.S. Chamber of Commerce, *Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Effectiveness*, <http://www.uschamber.com/icw/reportcard/default>

Accountability

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Sources: Utah State Office of Education, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Public Education Annual Report FY2007-08, Accountability and Results, <http://www.schools.utah.gov/default/AnnualReport.pdf>; Education Commission of the States, Utah State Profile, <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/52/61/5261.doc>

Standards, Assessments, and Accountability (2008) – Condensed		UT	TN	US (# of states)
Grade	Grade	C+	A-	B
	Total Score	78.2	91.5	
STANDARDS				
State has standards that are clear, specific, and grounded in content (2007)	English/language arts	H	E M H	8
	Mathematics	E M H	E M	24
	Science	M H	E M H	22
	Social studies/history	M H	M	2
State has a regular timeline for revising standards (2007-08)		✓		38
ASSESSMENTS				
Types of test item state uses to measure student performance (2007-08)	Multiple-choice	E M H	E M H	50
	Short-answer			29
	Extended-response in English/language arts	M H	E M H	45
	Extended-response in other subjects			24
	Portfolio			1
Subjects in which state uses assessments aligned to state standards (2007-08)	English/language arts	E M H	E M H	51
	Mathematics	E M H	E M H	50
	Science	E M H	E M H	46
	Social studies/history		E M H	12
Scores on the state assessment are vertically equated in grades 3-8 (2007-08)	English/language arts		✓	24
	Mathematics		✓	24

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY				
State holds schools accountable for performance (2007-08)	State assigns ratings to all schools based on criteria other than AYP	✓	✓	26
	State has a statewide student-identification system (2007)	✓	✓	48
	State provides rewards to high-performing or improving schools		✓	35
State holds both Title I and non-Title I schools accountable for performance (2007-08)	State provides assistance to low-performing schools		✓	39
	State sanctions low-performing schools		✓	32

Grade spans: E= elementary school, M= middle school, and H= high school.

Source: Education Week, *Quality Counts 2009*, Standards, Assessments, and Accountability (2008), http://www.edweek.org/apps/qc2009/state_compare.html

K-12 Funding

School Finance (2009) – Condensed		UT	TN	National Average
Grade	Grade	D+	D+	C+
	Total Score	66.7	67.7	77.2

SPENDING*			
Per-pupil expenditures (PPE), adjusted for regional cost differences (2006)	\$5,964	\$7,620	\$9,963
Percent of total taxable resources spent on education (2006)	3.2%	2.8%	3.7%

*The "Percent of students in districts with PPE at or above U.S. average" and the "Spending Index" indicators in this section are adjusted to reflect regional cost differences and weighted for student needs. The national average for adjusted per-pupil expenditures is \$9,644.

Source: Education Week, *Quality Counts 2009*, School Finance (2009), <http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/qc/2009/17sos.h28.finance.pdf>

Additional Funding Indicators	UT	TN	US
State & Local K-12 Education Spending (2006)			
Total state and local K-12 education spending (in millions)	\$3,369	\$7,364	\$526,649
State and local K-12 education spending per capita	\$1,306	\$1,212	\$1,763
State and local K-12 education spending as % of personal income	4.5%	3.8%	4.8%
Poverty Funding Gaps Over Time: 1999 – 2005			
Poverty gap change in dollars 1999-2005 (no adjustment for low income students)	-\$60	-\$275	-\$90
Minority Funding Gaps Over Time: 1999-2005			
Minority gap change in dollars 1999-2005 (no adjustment for low income students)	-\$62	\$51	\$73
Funding Gaps by State, 2005 (Adjusted for Low-Income Students)			
Gap between the highest- and lowest-poverty districts 2005 (40% adjustment for low-income students)	\$523	\$155	-\$1,532
Gap between the highest- and lowest-minority districts 2005 (40% adjustment for low-income students)	-\$122	-\$81	-\$1,275

*A negative number indicates that fewer dollars were provided to high-poverty or high-minority districts.

Sources: Governing, State and Local Sourcebook, State & Local K-12 Education Spending <http://sourcebook.governing.com/topicresults.jsp?sub=151>; The Education Trust, The Funding Gap 2008, http://www.closingtheachievementgap.org/cs/ctag/download/resources/75/FundingGap2007.pdf?x-r=pcfile_d

Other

Flexibility in Management and Policy = B

The state receives an above average grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. Ninety-seven percent of principals report a major level of influence over new teacher hiring, and 85% report a major degree of influence over how their school budgets are spent.

Data Quality = A

Utah gets excellent marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, Utah collects student-level college readiness test scores and transcript information, and it has a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.

Source U.S. Chamber of Commerce, *Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Effectiveness*, <http://www.uschamber.com/icw/reportcard/default>

Dual/Concurrent Enrollment

The New Century Scholarship Program, created by the Utah legislature in 1999, allows students to complete the requirements for an Associate of Arts or Science degree while they are enrolled in high school. Students who complete the A.A. or A.S. degree by the fall following their high school graduation are then offered a scholarship that pays for 75% of their tuition at a Utah four-year college or university. The scholarship will be cancelled if a student fails to maintain a "B" average for two consecutive semesters. Since 2000, 270 students have earned an A.A. degree while in high school. Utah reimburses school districts \$39.34 per credit to offset the cost of dual enrollment programs. Utah's funding system is unique since the state, schools districts and postsecondary institutions all contribute towards the cost of dual enrollment programs. This means that students can access the program at no extra cost to them. Concurrent courses are offered at all of Utah's 109 high schools, 141 middle schools and 10 state colleges, ensuring equitable access for all Utah high school students. Utah has also established six early college high schools to serve underrepresented or underachieving students interested in pursuing careers in math, science or technology.

Sources: Education Commission of the States, Dual/Concurrent Enrollment, <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/67/87/6787.htm>; Utah State Office of Education, Curriculum & Instruction, Early College, http://www.schools.utah.gov/curr/Early_College/CE.htm