EDUCATORS TAKING THE LEAD: A VISION FOR FOSTERING EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM UTAH TEACHERS TO THE UEA
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Message From Task Force Chair</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highly Effective Teachers – Teaching and Learning</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highly Effective Teachers – Standards of Professionalism</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and Retention</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Funding</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call to Action</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Force Members</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABOUT THIS REPORT

Each year dozens of policy changes affect Utah’s public schools, yet these changes do not always result in the best outcomes for students. Based on the knowledge that education professionals are best positioned to propose important solutions to strengthen teaching effectiveness and improve student outcomes, in May 2012, the Utah Education Association (UEA) organized the Educational Excellence Task Force to study and prioritize critical education issues and create a vision of teaching excellence designed and led by educators.

The task force was comprised of an outstanding group of 13 Utah educators who excel in the field of education and are leaders in the profession. The task force represents a breadth and depth of experience in many areas – elementary and secondary education; diverse curriculum areas; classroom teachers, instructional coaches, administrators and specialists; Title I and non-Title I schools.

The charge of the task force was to:

- Analyze the 2011 NEA Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching report and other relevant research to identify priorities for UEA and public education in Utah.
- Create a vision of teaching excellence that is led by teachers.
- Develop a comprehensive set of policy recommendations regarding teaching quality and effectiveness.
- Create a report to the UEA identifying key priorities for the Association.
- Engage policymakers, the public and association leadership in the important dialogue of change.

The result of months of research and dialogue was several key priorities that require long-term commitment and dedicated resources to strengthen the teaching profession and support high student outcomes:

- Ensuring highly effective teachers in *every* classroom as the key to student success.
- Supporting and increasing teacher professionalism.
- Recruiting and retaining the most highly effective teachers.
- Prioritizing education funding.
MESSAGE FROM TASK FORCE CHAIR

In May of 2012, a group of highly qualified, experienced educators were asked to begin a conversation about highly effective teaching in the state of Utah. What transpired was amazing. With students at the center of every conversation, we challenged one another’s beliefs about policy and practice. We shared stories about the failures and successes in our schools. We identified and created guidelines (for all stakeholders) that would accelerate our state to the top of the education ladder.

We are committed to a new vision – where teachers have the time, support and resources needed to meet the demands of a diverse learning population.

We envision schools, rich in learning, where educators and students excel.

We choose to transform our profession, knowing that educating our children is the key to creating a healthy, prosperous and compassionate society.

Our nation’s founding fathers knew that education was essential to the greatness of our country. Benjamin Franklin reminded us that, “An investment in education pays the best interest.” At the time, the idea of free, public education was revolutionary. Now we know that it is our greatest responsibility and our greatest promise. The time to invest is now. We want every child to have access to high-quality schools staffed by highly effective teachers. Every member of our great state will reap the benefits of this investment.

We are proud to commit ourselves to this very important work. With skill, conviction, passion and determination, we will prepare our children to be viable, active members of our evolving global world.

Anna Martinez Williams
Task Force Chairperson
December 2013
Excellence in Teaching and Learning
SUMMARY

Educators know that children are Utah’s greatest resource and every child deserves a quality education that provides them with the knowledge and skills necessary to be college and career ready and to pursue their individual goals. Educators also understand that every investment in a child’s education, whether by the legislature, family, school, teacher or community, is an investment in Utah’s future. Because teachers are the most significant school-level predictor of a child’s academic success, the need to ensure a quality teacher in every classroom is paramount. This report presents a bold vision of 21st century teaching and learning that will strengthen and enhance teaching quality and effectiveness in Utah.

The recommendations presented here are not quick fixes but long-term solutions that will require an ongoing commitment from all stakeholders to develop teacher excellence and to provide the systemic resources and supports necessary to achieve that excellence. Whether it be recruiting the best candidates into the teaching pipeline, providing competitive salaries to retain top teachers, improving working conditions to support best teaching practices or ensuring access to the highest quality professional development, supporting highly effective teachers is imperative to student success. Nothing can replace the influence of a highly effective teacher in every Utah classroom, and teachers must take primary responsibility for student learning and growth. However, because educational excellence is everyone’s responsibility, all stakeholders must work together to support educators and students in this vitally important work. Furthermore, to ensure teacher and student success, education policies and programs must be based on valid research, the expertise of education professionals and the collaborative input of all stakeholders.

Four key areas must be prioritized to achieve the goal of strengthening teaching effectiveness and improving learning outcomes for all Utah students:

1. Highly effective teachers are the model for every classroom and place student learning and well-being at the center of teaching.

2. Highly effective teachers exemplify the highest standards of professionalism.

3. Recruitment and retention of highly effective teachers is prioritized.

4. Education funding is a top priority.
HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS ARE THE MODEL FOR EVERY CLASSROOM AND PLACE STUDENT LEARNING AND WELL-BEING AT THE CENTER OF TEACHING

In the system we envision, public schools have a skilled workforce and the resources necessary to address the individual academic, social and emotional needs of students. Teachers share leadership in collaboration with administrators to create a culture of achievement and success. Teachers are at the center of decisions that affect instructional practice, curriculum and student achievement. Teaching is collaborative and professional development is ongoing and embedded in practice. The success of every student is a priority and student success is measured in numerous ways, with the unique learner differences and abilities of every child valued, encouraged and developed. All students are taught the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to be college and career ready, including in the areas of academics, learning, problem solving, critical thinking, character, collaboration, civic responsibility and the arts. Teachers communicate regularly with parents to jointly support the success of every student.
1. Every classroom has a highly effective teacher who is part of a collaborative and innovative team of professionals.

**Educators:**

- All educators within a school share a collective commitment to effectively implement systems and strategies that ensure the success of every student.
- Collaboration within and across grade levels and subject areas is valued as central to fostering student progress.
- Educators are given time to systematically analyze new programs, develop materials and implement meaningful changes in their classrooms as they collaboratively attend to the task of improving student outcomes.

**Instruction:**

- Instructional decisions are based on an understanding of learning processes, sound pedagogy, research-based best practices and cutting-edge resources.
- Curriculum is relevant, viable, integrated across subjects and requires thoughtful analysis and critical thinking.

**Assessment:**

- Teachers implement student assessments that are ongoing, varied, formative and summative, frequently analyzed and used to drive instruction and interventions.
- Student academic growth is accurately and fairly measured and frequently communicated.
- Multiple information delivery methods and opportunities for students to “show what they know” are available in all classrooms.

For a few years now I’ve been teaching my students the psychological research on “how to learn” and demonstrating that it can positively impact their learning and memory. I clearly remember one boy, whom I would later find out had struggled in his academic career, hesitantly approaching me after class when we had discussed these basic principles of learning. “Can I ask you something? I’m in high school and no one has ever taught me this before. Why not?” How can we expect students to successfully learn and retain the important knowledge, skills and dispositions we ask them to if we don’t teach them how to learn?

Dan Rozanas, Task Force Member
Classroom:

- Classroom management and procedures support student collaboration, critical thinking and scientifically rigorous methodologies.
- Classroom culture and management support optimum academic, social and emotional growth of all students.
- High levels of student engagement are expected and achieved.

Students:

- Teachers recognize the unique needs of individual students and adapt instruction accordingly.
- Teachers recognize that student outcomes beyond academic achievement, including character, civic responsibility and exposure to the arts, impact student success.
- Interventions are sufficiently implemented in order to help every student achieve mastery of learning goals and standards.
- With various cultures and languages represented in Utah schools, teachers recognize and prepare for individual learner differences by incorporating strategies for language acquisition into planning and instruction.

When asked, “What do you teach?” a colleague of mine responds, “I teach children.” An effective teacher differentiates content – by process, product, interest, readiness, etc. All children should have equal access to curriculum.

Anna Martinez Williams, Task Force Member

Utah teachers often hold multiple endorsements including English as a Second Language (ESL), Gifted and Talented, technology and reading. Many school districts require their teachers to obtain an ESL endorsement within the first three years of being hired, demonstrating a commitment to meeting the needs of all students.

2. Public schools are collaborative communities with student learning and well-being at the center of all decision making.

- Site-based decision making and shared leadership are practiced as a grass-roots approach to problem solving, proactive program development and attention to community concerns.
• Resources are allocated with the best interests of students in mind.

• Opportunities for collaboration and professional development are embedded in the school day and throughout the year for all educators, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of students.

• Teachers facilitate effective communication patterns with parents/guardians and other stakeholders.

• Effective schools are aligned with existing community resources and are themselves a resource for children, families and the community.

• School structures, including schedules, student groupings and teaching responsibilities are regularly evaluated and strategically adapted to meet the needs of the school community.

• Ongoing funding is provided to schools to teach research-based best practices for positive behavioral interventions, asset training, etc.

• Class size is reduced to allow teachers to provide high-quality, effective, individualized instruction to each student. Determining optimal class size at each grade level is research based and supported through adequate, ongoing funding. Teachers and administrators work collaboratively to determine reasonable class sizes in their building.

As a secondary school teacher, the benefits of a smaller class would be more time to know each student’s data as well as each student’s heart. It would mean more time to give feedback, time to spend 10 minutes responding to each written assignment rather than five. It would mean more notes home, more one-on-one conferences, more time to say, “How are you?” and then really listen to the answers. It would mean more books read, more assignments written, more thinking challenged and praised and less escape by students who tend to get lost in a big crowd. Fewer students would mean more humanity (and teacher sanity) in the classroom.

Jennifer Graviet, Task Force Member
Utah has some of the most crowded classrooms in the United States. In 2010, Utah’s “pupil-teacher ratio” was 23, compared to a national average of 16 and second only to California at 24.¹ A more precise measure of the impact to Utah’s classrooms is “class size.”² National comparative data from 2007-2008 show Utah’s elementary schools with an average class size of 24, compared to a national average of 20, and secondary schools with an average class size of 33, compared to a national average of 19.³ Recent state data indicate that “class size for elementary classes overall is 25 students per class, which is up from 24 students per class in 2010...[and] class size for secondary classes overall is 30 students per class, which is up from 29 in 2011.”⁴

Class size reduction has clear benefits. Long-term studies “from Tennessee, Wisconsin, and other states throughout the country demonstrate that students assigned to smaller classes in K-3 do better in every measurable way: they score higher on tests, receive better grades, and exhibit improved attendance and behavior.”⁵ And the benefits of smaller classes are not limited to early elementary. In fact, “there are at least fifteen studies that link smaller class sizes in the middle and upper grades to higher student achievement and lower rates of dropouts and disciplinary referrals.”⁶

Utah teachers know firsthand what research confirms, fewer students in a classroom allow a teacher to work one-on-one with a student, individualize instruction and provide personal support and guidance.

For an elementary school teacher the benefits of a smaller class would be improved student outcomes that are both measurable and replicable. Teachers would have more time to make deeper connections with students, develop more accurate and meaningful interventions with smaller groups of students and create more opportunities for in-depth understanding for students.

Judy Mahoskey,  
Task Force Member
In the system we envision, teachers are empowered and respected professionals whose knowledge, training, expertise and leadership are a cornerstone of student success. Beginning with a rigorous pre-service program, teachers achieve a knowledge base that includes learning theory and pedagogy, as well as content-specific proficiency, while addressing the growing diversity that constitutes Utah classrooms and communities today and in the future. Master teachers have a significant impact on the experience of pre-service and new teachers, and are afforded the time and resources necessary to effectively mentor and support newer educators. Highly effective teachers are experts at designing exacting, relevant curriculum and at assessing student progress. Teachers have multiple opportunities to lead and share best practices in education and to access sustained, high quality, relevant professional development. Additionally, teachers are regularly evaluated and receive clear, actionable feedback to improve teaching quality and effectiveness.
1. As role models for students, teachers demonstrate the highest standards of professionalism.
   - Teachers exemplify professional standards of conduct, appearance and behavior.
   - Teachers model a love of learning by pursuing professional opportunities to develop their craft.
   - Teachers embrace varied opportunities to excel in leadership roles in the education community.
   - Teachers are central to a collaborative, energized working and learning environment.

2. Rigorous pre-service experiences are essential to produce the highest quality teachers.
   - Pre-service programs include extensive public school classroom experiences and reflection in addition to in-depth pedagogy study and critical thinking.
   - Mentoring by recognized master teachers during practicum work, student teaching and internships is expected, paid for and provided for all pre-service teachers.
   - Pre-service programs address the unique strengths and challenges of Utah schools.
   - An ongoing dialogue with University partnerships includes classroom teachers, principals and district leaders.

3. Teacher professional development is systematic, sustained, relevant, aligned, focused and enduring.
   - Core standards, curriculum development, instructional delivery, research, pedagogy and proven management strategies are the focus of professional development.
   - Reflection, collaboration and accountability for implementation are components of professional development.
   - Teachers are given adequate time to evaluate and implement new strategies, technologies and techniques to effectively understand the impact on classroom practice.
   - Model classrooms and peer coaching are required as part of a collaborative improvement model.
   - Specific and effective interventions and enhancements are applied.
   - Cutting-edge technology supports professional development and is central to classroom instruction.
4. Teacher evaluation is thorough, frequent and performed by trained and effective evaluators to support teacher progress toward excellence.

**Multiple Measures**

- Teacher accountability is based on multiple valid, reliable and replicable evaluation instruments.
- Teachers participate in the creation of evaluation standards.
- Evaluations are systematic, valid and reliable in measuring teacher effectiveness and include measures to account for factors such as access to resources, language skills, special education, socioeconomic status, attendance rates and other dynamics that contextualize a classroom.

**Evaluation Process**

- Evaluation is comprehensive, including multiple scheduled and unscheduled observations and data points.
- Evaluators are trained and effective and their results are calibrated and replicable.
- The evaluation process includes a pre-conference to set goals and a post-conference to provide actionable feedback including a plan for differentiated professional development.
- Evaluations emphasize teaching the whole child.
- Parent and/or student feedback is part of the evaluation process.

**Accountability**

- Master teachers and administrators work together as a team to evaluate, remediate and recommend employment decisions.
- Administrator, peer and stakeholder feedback is implemented by teachers to increase their effectiveness in the classroom.
- In addition to individual teacher accountability, evaluation tools incentivize and measure team accountability for student achievement and success.
In the system we envision, the teaching pipeline supports teachers at every stage of their professional development. Pre-service programs attract highly skilled and competitive candidates, are rigorous and sufficiently prepare candidates. Novice teachers receive intensive support and mentoring throughout their early years. Master teachers are able to grow into varied and new career opportunities. Valuable professional resources such as intensive peer mentoring, paraprofessional support in the classroom and a building leader dedicated to improving instructional effectiveness are provided. Highly effective teachers are able to stay in the classroom through the practice of differentiated career pathways. Teachers are supported by encouraging educator-led, grass-roots initiatives, increasing funding for current state initiatives and increasing collaboration between educators and policymakers on new initiatives. Finally, compensation is professionally competitive, reflects the knowledge, skills, expertise, training and effectiveness of teachers, and is determined through multiple factors.
1. Highly effective teachers are recruited, trained and retained through deliberate policies that strengthen the teaching profession.

- A competitive base salary aligned with a tiered compensation model, bargained at the local level, is offered to attract, retain and reward highly effective teachers.
  - Each tier reflects increased skills, knowledge and responsibilities.
  - The salary for each tier represents a significant percentage increase over the previous tier.
  - Advancement to the next tier is not automatic and requires evidence of effectiveness based on an evaluation and multiple data sources such as:
    - Level of effectiveness as determined by peer-reviewed evaluations.
    - Valid and reliable performance-based assessments.
    - Implementation of effective practices based on professional learning.
    - Additional endorsements, licenses or degrees that broaden a teacher’s knowledge and skills.
    - Attainment of National Board Certification.
    - Completion of action research projects.
  - Within a given tier, a teacher may receive additional compensation for professional practices such as:
    - Serving in a hard-to-staff school or a hard-to-staff teaching position.
    - Operating a model classroom for the benefit of fellow teachers.
    - Participating in an expanded learning day or year.
    - Assuming additional roles and responsibilities such as peer reviewer, instructional leader or teacher educator.

---

We are losing some of our best teacher candidates. Last spring, from four student teachers at an elementary school, two took jobs outside the teaching profession making more money than if they were teaching. One said, “I made this decision with a promise to myself that as soon as my husband could support us through HIS job, I would return to the job I love-- teaching.”

*Mary Ellen Smith, Task Force Member*
Because research does not support the efficacy of strict performance pay models, teacher compensation is not solely or primarily tied to student scores on standardized tests.

A minimum starting salary of $50,000 is necessary.

For the 2012-2013 school year, starting salaries for Utah teachers averaged $33,501 per year. Minimum starting salaries across the state ranged from a low of $29,890 in North Summit School District to a high of $38,409 in Park City School District. Utah’s average falls below the national average starting teacher salary at $35,672. By comparison, the average starting salary for 2013 college graduates nationally is $45,327.

Increasing starting salaries for Utah teachers would make education more competitive with professions requiring similar academic preparation, specialized knowledge and skills and would promote a more stable workforce by retaining experienced and skilled educators. In addition to increasing base salary to recruit and retain, establishing sufficient paid professional development days and time for collaboration among teachers not only brings education salaries further in line with similar professions but creates opportunities for improving teacher quality and student outcomes.

Intensive mentoring through an Instructional Coaching program is provided. Site-based, district-funded, peer-selected coaches based in each building serve as mentors to both new and veteran teachers:

- Coaches work as mentors who conduct frequent classroom observations, assist with planning, provide resources and model effective pedagogical practices.
- Site-based coaching ensures that professional support is ongoing, authentic and conducted by a teacher leader within each school.
- Coaches are selected by their peers and administrators because they are recognized as school leaders and exemplary classroom practitioners.
- Coaches work with teachers in a collaborative, non-evaluative capacity to refine instructional practice.
- Administrators may request that a coach work with a struggling teacher before, during or after a formal evaluation, to ensure that the teacher is receiving adequate professional mentoring and guidance.
- Coaches work half-time teaching and half-time coaching in order to maintain exemplary teaching skills.
- Districts pay for coaches in each building and coaches design and conduct authentic professional development within their buildings.
- A leader in each building is dedicated to the role of supporting and increasing instructional effectiveness, in addition to and distinct from any other building leader position.

We recognize the wisdom and value of having a superintendent as the instructional leader of the district and a separate business administrator to handle the day-to-day business and finances of the district, given the enormous time and responsibilities of each position. Given the similar demands placed upon building administrators, we recommend that school districts create a hybrid administrative model with the principal as instructional leader of the school and a new position of business administrator to handle the business and financial responsibilities of the school. This would allow the principal to have the time to intensively and successfully focus on the academic, social and professional development of students and staff.

- Programs and policies are created to attract diverse populations to the teaching profession.
- Financial incentives for new and veteran teachers are expanded, such as:
  - Loan forgiveness for teachers who work in hard-to-staff subjects and hard-to-staff schools.
  - Mortgage-rate discounts and home purchasing assistance.
  - Tuition reimbursement for earning required endorsements.
  - Tax incentives.
  - Retirement incentives.
Classroom teachers and other educators partner with the Utah State Office of Education and institutions of higher education to address policies to increase teacher effectiveness, specifically:

- Quality of educator preparation programs.
- Standardization of admissions requirements for educator preparation programs.
- Parameters of student teaching experience.
- Quality of student teacher supervisors.
- Licensure requirements.
- Requiring pre-service teachers to pass all certification tests before receiving Level One licensure.

For almost 30 years, five Utah school districts - Alpine, Jordan, Nebo, Provo and Wasatch - have participated in the Brigham Young University Public School Partnership. Teachers in elementary partnership schools open their classrooms to two levels of practicum students and student teachers. Intern teachers are hired by each of the five districts along with a school facilitator, who works as a highly qualified partner with first-year teachers. Intern teachers have their own classroom for a full year instead of student teaching for 10 weeks in another teacher’s classroom. In an Early Childhood and Elementary Partnership Advisory Committee meeting, BYU faculty, clinical faculty associates, district administrators, classroom teachers, school facilitators and principals from each of the five districts meet together bi-monthly to communicate, collaborate and review all aspects of the partnership. This partnership between representatives of schools, districts and BYU’s elementary education department means that each one has a voice in the education and success of pre-service teachers.
2. Highly effective teachers are provided with varied career options that allow them to remain in the classroom.

- A model of differentiated career pathways allows educators to develop their own strengths and interests while also identifying and supporting the growth of new leaders.

In one such model:

- **Master teachers** are “recruited, developed and paid at levels that will encourage them to stay in the community…[they] serve in hybrid roles that include teaching students, working with colleagues and serving as liaisons with the community…they are provided with training in coaching and instructional practices so they are well prepared to support the professional development of other teachers.”

- **Professional teachers** are “career teachers…[who] underpin the work of master teachers, providing excellent instruction for students and support for colleagues – and important continuity within the school.”

- **Resident teachers** work in “intensive residencies where they learn to teach in high needs schools under the tutelage of master and professional teachers.”

- **Apprentice teachers** are recent college graduates “teamed with master teachers for continuous support.”

- **Individualized instruction specialists** “work with students who have special needs, students who are English language learners…and students with atypical learning styles. [They] work in partnership with other teachers, focused on inclusion models and building upon individual students’ capabilities.”

- **Virtual teachers** receive “special training in how to teach effectively via a blend of online technologies…with special preparation they have the know-how to blend in-class and online activities.”

At Park City High School, a teacher is assigned to monitor the grades and attendance of struggling students. This teacher works closely with each student, his/her teachers and parents and other vested parties to ensure the student’s academic success. Under the title “Academics Count,” this teacher’s responsibility is to see that struggling students are given full access to curriculum support, emotional support and other additional resources. The teacher and student meet regularly to discuss progress and these students are not allowed to be “invisible.”
3. Resources are designed and provided to ensure that highly effective teachers are supported in their classrooms and profession.

- Resources and support for implementing existing education policy initiatives are increased while additional legislative reform proposals are deferred.
- Educator-led, school-level reform initiatives addressing curriculum and instruction are encouraged.
- The ideas and experience of public educators are included in designing legislation impacting public education in a climate of collaboration to more effectively impact student success and achievement.
- More paraprofessionals are hired to support teachers in the classroom by doing non-instructional and administrative tasks.
- School-wide innovation is promoted by incentivizing school-wide progress in addition to individual classroom progress.
- On-site services to students for academic counseling, psychological and medical resources and crisis counseling, as well as security services, are provided to improve student and employee safety and well-being.
- On-site day care facilities that are high quality and affordable are provided.
- Partnerships with businesses are developed to provide classroom discounts, materials, resources and other support.
- Classes of education cohorts are organized within local districts to enable teachers to get advanced degrees based on classroom-embedded practices and action research.
In the system we envision, legislators invest in the creation of a world-class educational system. New sources of revenue are identified in order to adequately fund Utah’s schools and provide students with the best teachers, resources, facilities and technological opportunities. Annual student growth is funded to keep pace with Utah’s growing population and increased funding to reduce large class sizes is prioritized. Funding to support benefits for education employees comparable to other public employees is instituted. Dedicated and ongoing funding for professional development, planning, collaboration and other site-based needs is established to support highly effective teachers. Funding levels and priorities recognize the importance of providing every Utah student with a first-rate education.
1. Funding is adequate to support Utah’s students, teachers and public schools.

- A long-term plan to adequately fund education through existing and new revenue sources is developed by policymakers, in partnership with educators.
- Utah’s funding effort is increased to be commensurate with historical funding efforts in order to adequately fund the needs of Utah’s students and classrooms.11
- Annual student growth is fully funded.
- The existing social security and retirement line item is fully funded comparable to other public employees.
- The legislature establishes and fully funds with new revenue a health insurance line item for school district employees comparable to other public employees.
- The educator salary adjustment line item is fully funded annually.
- Class-size reduction is a top priority.
- Cutting-edge technology is made available, along with training, in order to equalize the playing field and prepare students for the 21st century.
- Tutoring and summer school mastery classes are funded, available and required for struggling students.
- Flexible scheduling and funding, which allows districts to make decisions to best meet student needs, is determined at the local level and results in high levels of success.

At one elementary school, a team of first-grade teachers dedicated the Friday before the school year began to conducting diagnostic assessments on all of their students for the upcoming year. The teachers arranged with the parents to bring in their students for 15-30 minutes each to allow for one-on-one assessments in order to gather essential information about each student. This allowed teachers to begin from the first day of the school year tailoring instruction to the individual needs of the students.

- Districts and policymakers utilize research-based models of innovation that support student success.
2. Highly effective teachers are instructional experts and require sufficient support and resources to allow them to focus on student learning.

- Dedicated and ongoing funding for the support of professional development is established.

- Dedicated and ongoing funding for at least 20 additional non-instructional days to provide for planning, preparation and collaboration, designed and supervised by site-based teams, is established.

Teachers and staff at Liberty Elementary School in Murray know that teamwork matters. That’s why they spend three unpaid days together at a mountain retreat each summer, strengthening relationships and discussing challenges at their Title I school. They’ve adopted a site-based, shared-leadership model, where everyone’s contribution to the well-being and development of students is valued. Cooks, custodians, paraprofessionals, the librarian, teachers and principal develop collective commitments around topics ranging from lunchroom protocol to homework expectations and student engagement. District administration supports the Liberty effort with a small financial contribution, which is well worth the results in school climate and student achievement.
CALL TO ACTION

We call upon the Utah State Board of Education to:

1. Advocate for public education and public education employees.
2. Revise policies and regulations to ensure teacher preparation programs and licensure requirements align with National Council for the Teaching Profession standards.
3. Ensure that a majority of state standards and practice board members are master teachers.
4. Collaborate with teacher associations and teacher preparation programs to redesign teacher preparation programs that will provide effective teachers for every Utah classroom.
5. Require and promote the highest standards of professionalism and training for all Utah teachers.
6. Endorse access to high-quality professional development for all public school educators.
7. Hold school districts accountable for providing equitable and fair education opportunities across the district.
8. Design a long-term plan, mission and goals that all stakeholders contribute to and are invested in for school improvement and that legislators and policymakers use when proposing legislation or planning for change.

We call upon the Utah State Legislature to:

1. Develop a long-term, sustainable, transparent funding plan for public education that funds adequate teacher preparation, planning and professional development, in addition to required student days.
2. Empower educators to develop and implement research-based solutions for educational issues at the local level.
3. Incentivize educational leadership to find grass-roots solutions to educational problems.
4. Engage public educators in ongoing discussions regarding legislation that impacts public schools.
5. Limit new legislative mandates and pilot programs that do not advance the goals of an adopted long-term education plan.
6. Support the goals of a statewide, long-term plan for school improvement developed collaboratively between the Utah State Board of Education, policymakers and educators.

We call upon the Utah Education Association and local teacher associations to:

1. Collaborate with education entities to develop educator evaluation tools that will identify and reward effective educators and develop, remediate or dismiss ineffective teachers.

2. Partner with the Utah State Board of Education, universities and other education entities to revise teacher preparation programs to ensure graduates are prepared to be effective and successful in public schools.

3. Advocate for and provide training in shared leadership models to develop leadership and grass-roots solutions to educational problems.

4. Mobilize and empower educators to be well informed and proactive regarding education issues.

5. Promote research-based best practices for Utah educators.

6. Support the goals of a statewide, long-term plan for school improvement developed collaboratively between policymakers and educators.

We call upon educators to:

1. Take responsibility for the learning and development of all students in the school community, with a goal of preparing students to be college and career ready, while maintaining a broad curriculum to support student growth and success.

2. Promote and display the highest levels of professionalism.

3. Assist fellow educators in achieving the highest levels of educator performance.

4. Engage families to address specific learning and/or environmental issues impacting student progress.

5. Welcome the involvement of volunteers and community partnerships in ways that promote student success.

6. Model a love of learning and critical analysis by committing to continued professional development.

7. Support, coach and lead fellow educators by participating in mentoring programs and by guiding student teachers, interns and practicum students.
8. Provide vision and leadership by participating in educational forums, task forces, pilot studies and focus groups.

9. Be informed and proactive regarding education issues and policies.

10. Support the goals of a statewide, long-term plan for school improvement developed collaboratively between policymakers and educators.

**We call upon school districts to:**

1. Recognize, encourage and incentivize all individuals demonstrating exceptional school leadership.

2. Collaborate with effective educators to design teacher evaluation systems, standards for professionalism, professional development opportunities and other education solutions.

3. Empower school teams to create collaborative professional learning communities that address issues specific to their environments.

4. Provide access to relevant and ongoing professional development opportunities for all educators.

5. Implement programs that support safe schools and well-managed classrooms.

6. Provide resources to help students master skills and acquire knowledge.

7. Embed planning and collaboration time within the school day for every teacher.

8. Collaborate with educators to develop effective and realistic tools and systems that accurately inform educators and parents as to student understanding and progress, regardless of class placement and teacher.

9. Support the goals of a statewide, long-term plan for school improvement developed collaboratively between policymakers and educators.

**We call upon parents, guardians and the community to:**

1. Support the children in their family and/or community with their school work and school attendance.

2. Participate in decision making in school community councils, local schools and district school boards.

3. Volunteer in the schools frequently.

4. Promote respect and a love of learning among children, parents, educators and the community.
5. Promote good communication between schools, families and the community.

6. Support the goals of a statewide, long-term plan for school improvement developed collaboratively between policymakers and educators.

We call upon students to:

1. Come to school every day prepared and ready to learn.

2. Participate in their own learning by giving feedback to teachers and the school about learning needs and challenges.

3. Show respect for peers and educators.

4. Support the goals of a statewide, long-term plan for school improvement developed collaboratively between policymakers and educators.
TASK FORCE MEMBERS

**Anna Martinez Williams**, Task Force chair, was *Teacher of the Year* in 2010 for the Park City School District and in 2012 received an *Excellence in Teaching Award* from the Utah Education Association. In 1991, Anna began her teaching career in California and taught English as a Second Language. She went on to teach English and Spanish at both the high school and community college levels in California, Mississippi and Texas. Anna currently works as an instructional coach for the Park City School District, working with Spanish Dual-Immersion teachers as well as provisional teachers in Park City. She facilitates professional development statewide to enhance instructional practices for English language learners. Anna has an undergraduate degree from the University of San Diego and a master’s degree from Boston College.

**Eve Bean**, a National Board Certified Teacher, currently serves as an elementary assistant principal and faculty member in the Davis School District. With over 25 years of experience in the private sector, Eve’s 12-year tenure as an educator centers her life on the very best clientele – children. Even before receiving her education licensure in 1999, she received the Board of Education Highest Recognition for dedicated and outstanding service for the students in the Davis School District. Eve has served on numerous district and state cadres to develop curriculum, realign academic standards and define professional standards. In 2010, she was selected as a fellow of the Mickelson ExxonMobil Math and Science Teachers Academy, Jersey City, New Jersey. She earned a bachelor’s degree in Organizational Communications/Music from Brigham Young University, a bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from Weber State University, a master’s degree from National University in La Jolla, California and is currently enrolled in the Administrative Supervisory Certificate Program at Utah State University.

**Laurel Brown** has over three decades of practice in speech-language pathology, having obtained bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Communication Disorders from Brigham Young University. Her experience includes working with ages ranging from preschool, elementary and secondary to adult and geriatric levels in a variety of both educational and medical settings. Presently she is employed in Murray City School District where she serves as the brain-injury team leader at the junior high, high school and adult level. In addition to her professional responsibilities, Laurel recently completed 12 years as a member of the Utah State Board of Education and was chair of the Curriculum Standing Committee. As a member of the National Association of State Boards of Education, she served on numerous ad hoc committees at both the state and national level. Currently, Laurel serves on the nominating committee of the Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration.
Jennifer Graviet has been teaching English and creative writing at Sand Ridge Junior High School in Weber School District for over 18 years. She’s been instrumental in creating school-wide programs, including a mentoring program, a transitioning program for incoming seventh-graders and an informational text school-wide reading program. With bachelor’s degrees in both English and psychology and a master’s degree in psychology, Jennifer graduated summa cum laude in both her undergraduate and graduate programs. In addition to teaching, Jennifer has been a coach, student government advisor, leader of the School Improvement Team, chair of accreditation and department head. Her teaching awards include Strengthening Sand Ridge, Standing Out at the Ridge, 2013 Weber School District Teacher of the Year, second runner-up for the 2013 Utah Teacher of the Year and she was also nominated for the 2014 NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. Jennifer has served as a Weber Education Association representative for nearly 10 years, been a delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly and is a board member of the Weber Education Association.

Debra R. Green has been the choral director at Sand Ridge Junior High School in Weber School District for 19 years. She served as the Weber School District Junior High choral coordinator for three years. She earned her bachelor’s degree in secondary education graduating cum laude from Weber State University and in 2002 earned a master’s degree in psychology with a Level II school counseling certification from Utah State University. She has both English as a Second Language and Reading Level II endorsements. Debra is an active member of Music Educators National Conference, American Choral Directors Association, International Reading Association, Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society and Kappa Delta Pi Education Honor Society. Debra served 11 years as a representative from Sand Ridge Junior High School for the Weber Education Association and in 2012 she was elected to the UEA Board of Directors, representing the Ogden-Weber UniServ.

Judy Mahoskey, a 2012 Huntsman Award for Excellence in Education recipient, has received recognition for her work with students by the Murray City Chamber of Commerce, the Sons of the Utah Pioneers and Murray School District. A past president of the Murray Education Association, she has chaired NEA’s Read Across America campaign in Utah, participated in multiple education workgroups and led a variety of political action movements in order to influence educational outcomes. A passionate advocate for Utah students and teachers, Judy has provided leadership as a Murray School District/University of Utah liaison, a trainer for Murray district’s Academy of Instruction and as a team leader in site-based decision making. Nationally Board Certified in 2006, she holds a master’s degree in Curriculum and Instruction, an elementary reading endorsement, an elementary ELL endorsement and an elementary math endorsement. She has been teaching in a Title I school in Murray since 1983.
Suzy Merrill is a third-grade teacher at Oakridge Elementary in the Granite School District. She has a master’s degree in teaching and a bachelor’s degree in communications with a minor in political science. In 2010, Suzy was selected by the Utah State Office of Education to represent Utah at the standard settings panel for the Praxis PLT in Princeton, New Jersey. She has served as a cooperating teacher/supervisor for the University of Utah and Utah State University. She is third-grade team leader at Oakridge Elementary and has worked for the Granite School District as a teacher trainer in the language arts core curriculum. In the summer, she teaches for the Granite School District’s Mill Hollow Outdoor Education program. Suzy was the recipient of the 2012 Golden Apple Outstanding Educator Award for PTA, Aspen Council.

Jennifer Roberts holds a master’s degree in Middle Grades Math and Science along with an elementary endorsement. She has taught elementary and junior high in a variety of settings including inner city, magnet, charter and Title I schools. She has been recognized as Teacher of the Year at three schools, as the district Teacher of the Year for Bibb County, Georgia and was also a finalist for Georgia Teacher of the Year. Jennifer was awarded the Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching and earned National Board Certification in Early Adolescent Mathematics. Jennifer has served as the lead math teacher at two schools, providing mentoring and staff development training along with serving on district and state committees. She has also chaired school-level efforts to improve assessment and instruction. She is currently serving on her district’s committee to review, revise and approve new evaluations for teachers and administrators. Jennifer currently teaches sixth grade at Lincoln Elementary in Layton, Utah. After 16 years of teaching, she is still excited about the opportunities to improve both her own teaching and the profession.

Dan Rozanas is a high school social studies teacher at Alta High School in the Canyons School District. For over 20 years he has been actively involved in both his own education and in trying to improve education for all students at the classroom, school, district and state levels. He earned a master’s degree in Clinical and Health Psychology and has successfully taught psychology, philosophy and history during his high school career. He has served as both an AP reader and table leader, worked for ETS in test development and has co-organized a professional conference for Utah psychology teachers for over 10 years. In addition, he has been a part of almost every committee available through his school, district and local teachers association serving in a variety of roles including teacher mentor, building leadership team member and executive board member. He is passionate about teaching students “how to learn” and the amazing life applications of the content areas he is fortunate enough to teach.
Mary Ellen Smith is a teacher specialist in the Jordan School District with 26 years of experience teaching kindergarten, first grade, sixth grade and middle school, as well as pre-service teacher candidates at Brigham Young University. She currently works with intern teachers, student teachers and practicum teacher candidates as Brigham Young University Partnership Facilitator at Eastlake Elementary. She served as a clinical faculty associate with the BYU Partnership in Jordan and Canyons School Districts. As a teacher leader she has participated in BYU’s Associates Program, Urban Learning Support Committee, Arts Academy and Elementary Education Partnership Advisory Council, Phi Delta Kappa International Constitutional Convention, State Geography Bee judge, Jordan Education Association representative, Parent Teacher Association faculty representative, Social Studies Book Adoption Committee, Gifted & Talented Network Committee, Student Council advisor and Student Lighthouse Team advisor. Under the direction of Robert Bullough, she completed the Action Research Study The Clinical Faculty Associate and the Efficacy Field of Supervision in the Partnership School. Mary graduated from Southern Utah University with a bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education and later earned a master’s degree from University of Phoenix. She holds endorsements in special education, early childhood, English as a Second Language and math.

Denise Ulrich has served in Utah’s public schools for 10 years. After graduating with honors from Weber State University, she spent three successful years teaching second grade before working as a reading specialist and instructional coach for three years. Her passion for teaching grew even more through the knowledge and expertise she gained while achieving two reading endorsements and it drew her back to the classroom. Denise has been back teaching second grade for the last four years. Since returning to the classroom, she has been involved in her school’s Joint Staff School Committee and School Community Council. She has recently been a leader in her district in developing engaging resources for the language arts core curriculum. On her grade level team she facilitates collaboration across the curriculum and helps maintain a positive morale among her colleagues. Denise currently teaches second grade at Foxboro Elementary in the Davis School District.

Leigh Mariani VandenAkker is Utah’s 2012 Teacher of The Year. Known to her students as “Mrs. V.” she has taught high school in the public school system for over 20 years. She is a 2013 Global Fellow and recently completed an educational journey to Brazil. She is also the recipient of Utah’s 2011 Golden Apple Award. Leigh holds a master’s degree in Education from Utah State University and a bachelor’s degree from the University of Utah. In addition, she has a post-graduate certificate from the University of Utah’s Mediation and Conflict Resolution Program, and is endorsed in English as a Second Language, sociology and psychology. Leigh currently teaches in the Salt Lake City School District at East High
School. She is the co-author of “Techniques for Tough Times,” a curriculum created to aid in classroom teaching of communication and anger management skills.

*Patti Zealley* has taught for 18 years, nine years as a preschool teacher and nine years as a kindergarten teacher. Patti is an enthusiastic teacher who loves music and incorporates it into much of her teaching. She creatively puts concepts and sounds to music to help children remember them and she also uses music to create a variety of parent programs. Patti has a master’s degree in Education, as well as an early childhood certification and English as a Second Language certification. She has used her ingenuity to bring needed resources into her classroom by writing grants to help purchase equipment, build learning centers and bring in other resources. She has served on the ART Committee, the SAC Committee (chair) and most recently the Lighthouse Team in implementing the Seven Habits by Sean Covey. Patti currently teaches at Silver Crest Elementary in the Jordan School District.
REFERENCES

1. National Center for Education Statistics. Table 78: Teachers, enrollment, and pupil/teacher ratios in public elementary and secondary schools, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, fall 2000 through fall 2010.

2. National Education Association. Class Size Reduction: A Proven Reform Strategy. Pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) is considered less reliable because it “is usually derived from the number of students in a school divided by the number of professional staff (not only teachers), while class size should be the actual number of students who regularly appear in a teacher’s classroom. Quantitative estimates put the difference between the PTR and actual class size at about 10 students, with the commonly used PTR designation making classes appear smaller than they really are.” This would mean that an elementary school with a pupil-teacher ratio of 18 would typically have an average class size of 27 to 28 students.

3. National Center for Education Statistics. Table 8: Average class size for public school teachers in elementary schools, secondary schools, and schools with combined grades, by classroom types and state: 2007-08.


6. Class Size Matters. The Importance of Class Size in the Middle and Upper Grades. http://www.classsizematters.org/?s=the+importance+of+class+size+in+middle+and+upper+grades&submit.x=0&submit.y=0


11. Utah Foundation. Utah’s Education Funding Effort: State Faces Long-Term Challenges. June 2011 and Utah’s Academic Performance and K-12 Funding Efforts. Presentation by Stephen Kroes to the Legislative Education Task Force, June 2013. Data indicate that Utah’s education funding effort, defined as public education revenues per $1,000 of personal income, has steadily declined over the past two decades. In 1995 Utah ranked seventh nationally in funding effort but by 2011 Utah had fallen below average and ranked nationally at 32nd.
RESOURCES

Alliance for Excellent Education. *A System Approach to Building a World-Class Teaching Profession: The Role of Induction*, October 2011.


Class Size Matters. *The Importance of Class Size in the Middle and Upper Grades*. http://www.classsizematters.org/?s=the+importance+of+class+size+in+middle+and+upper+grades&submit.x=0&submit.y=0


Goe, Laura and Stickler, Leslie M. *Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: Making the Most of Recent Research*. National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, March 2008.


Michele McNeil. *Duncan: Teacher Salaries Should be $60,000 to $150,000*. Education Week, July 29, 2011.


National Center for Education Statistics. Table 78: Teachers, enrollment, and pupil/teacher ratios in public elementary and secondary schools, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, fall 2000 through fall 2010.

National Center for Education Statistics. Table 8: Average class size for public school teachers in elementary schools, secondary schools, and schools with combined grades, by classroom types and state: 2007-08.


Utah Foundation. Utah’s Education Funding Effort: State Faces Long-Term Challenges, June 2011.


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The members of the Educational Excellence Task Force would like to thank those individuals whose vision, encouragement and commitment helped to make this report possible, including the UEA Board of Directors, UEA President Sharon Gallagher-Fishbaugh, UEA Executive Director Mark Mickelsen, UEA staff, superintendents, principals and esteemed colleagues. With sincere appreciation and gratitude, we would like to acknowledge UEA Director of Educational Excellence and Community Outreach Dr. Sara Jones for her guidance, patience and support. She played an instrumental role in helping us to organize our thoughts and provide us with data and resources. She was also our greatest cheerleader.

Anna Martinez Williams
Task Force Chairperson