



The Future We Choose...Supporting Education in Salt Lake County

Background

Salt Lake County is committed to taking the necessary steps today to have the future we choose tomorrow – a future where Salt Lake County is the healthiest place in America to live. The Future We Choose is Mayor McAdams’ strategy for Salt Lake County through 2016. Our goals are to: 1) Enhance Salt Lake County’s quality of life; 2) Facilitate collaborative partnerships to realize regional opportunities; and 3) Deliver excellent customer satisfaction through personalized service.

The Future We Choose will enhance Salt Lake County’s quality of life by encouraging job growth; increasing educational opportunities, and fostering healthy families. Salt Lake County understands these objectives are built upon the success of our children. We firmly believe that every child should have the opportunity to achieve his or her potential, regardless of zip code or economic circumstance. Investment in our children pays off for them individually and for the community and economy as a whole.

Our objective for expanding opportunities is to ensure children enter kindergarten ready to learn and are supported through lifelong learning opportunities. We will do this by expanding high quality, voluntary preschool opportunities across the region, increasing the percentage of children able to read at grade level by third grade, improving academic performance of students in our after school programs and increasing the percentage of youth who graduate from high school.

Why does Salt Lake County support education?

According to Mayor Ben McAdams, “There is no better investment we can make in the future than the education of our children.” Salt Lake County does not run the public education system; however, it does have a role to play, including supporting and offering high quality early literacy, childcare, preschool, summer programs, and after school programs. Significant research demonstrates that participating in quality early literacy, preschool, and after school programs are critical elements to children’s success in school and life, especially for children who are considered at-risk.

According to a recent report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation¹, children are learning to read through 3rd grade and then reading to learn beginning in 4th grade. The same research shows that 85 percent of a child’s brain is developed by age five, yet on average, economically disadvantaged 3-year olds know 500 words whereas economically advantaged 3-year olds know 1,100 words. If a child is not reading on grade level by third grade, he or she will have a difficult time keeping up in later grades.

Furthermore, investments in children ages birth to 5 improve school readiness and result in decreased crime, teen pregnancy, delinquency, substance abuse, and welfare dependency as well as increased high school graduation rates, 4 year college enrollment, employment in a high skilled job and income. The science of early

¹ The Annie E. Casey Foundation, (January 2014). *Early Reading Proficiency in the United States*. Retrieved from www.aecf.org.

brain development helps illustrate how child development, before the age of 5, is the foundation for success in life and a prosperous society.²

In 2010, 147,000 (28%) of Utah's school-age youth were responsible for taking care of themselves during work hours before and after school and only 9% of Utah's K-12 children participated in afterschool programs.³ Studies show that students who attend afterschool programs get better grades and stay in school instead of dropping out.⁴ Furthermore, students are more likely to graduate, have lower incidences of drug use, violence and teen pregnancy – all of which help to make them more productive, caring and economically strong.⁵

Lastly, a youth's success is often tied to the engagement of a parent. Parent engagement typically refers to the communication and participation between parents, schools, and communities with the goal of supporting and ensuring a student's success both in school and in life. Parent engagement strategies include activities such as family literacy programs, English as a second language (ESL) and computer classes, financial literacy, connecting parents to community resources, parenting classes, as well as family recreation programs. These programs support and improve the learning and development of youth.

How does Salt Lake County currently support education?

During the spring of 2014, representatives from Human Services (Library Services, Youth Services, Aging and Adult Services, Office of Community Innovation and Partnerships and USU Extension), Community Services (Parks and Recreations and the Clark Planetarium), and the Office of Regional Development (Community Resources and Development) reviewed existing County programs that were identified as supporting our objectives. We found that Salt Lake County currently contributes significantly to expanding opportunities for children.

Nearly **\$5.4 million** in federal, state and local funding is invested in various programs supporting education in Salt Lake County. Over **\$1.4 million** comes from the County's general fund. Fees from Parks and Recreation child care and before and after school programs contribute **\$2.1 million** and nearly **\$364,000** comes directly from the Library fund. The remaining **\$1.2 million** in funding comes from the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG), 21st Century Grants (Education), State General Fund, Corporation for National Community Service (CNCS), the United Way of Salt Lake and businesses. This analysis does not include other programs in the community that receive funding from many of the same sources (**See table 1**).

There are many ways Salt Lake County supports education. Salt Lake County provides informal support such as technical assistance, curriculum development, and access to libraries, parks and recreation facilities and the arts.

² "In Brief: The Science of Early Childhood Development," Center for the Developing Child, Harvard University.

³ America After 3PM Survey. (2010).

⁴ Afterschool Alert, Issue Brief 22; Afterschool Alliance, November 2005.

⁵ The Impact of Afterschool Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills; Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, <http://www.casel.org/downloads/ASP-Full.pdf> 2007.



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Our public facilities provide a safe, educational environment where kids can retreat from dangers that may exist in their neighborhoods. Salt Lake County also provides more formal programming summarized below:

Table 1.

Program Type	Total Funding	General Fund	Fees	Library Fund	Other
Child Care	\$1,850,719	-	\$1,850,719	-	-
Early Literacy	\$191,500	-	-	\$191,500	-
In School Time	\$210,250	\$35,743	-	-	\$174,507
Out of School Time	\$1,415,710	\$619,807	-	\$102,000	\$693,903
Preschool	\$350,000	\$350,000	-	-	-
Summer Programs	\$449,491	\$7,000	\$272,315	\$70,000	\$100,176
General Support	\$923,771	\$425,944	-	-	\$497,826
Total	\$5,391,441	\$1,438,494	\$2,123,034	\$363,500	\$1,466,412

Early Literacy (Ages 0-5) programs provide our best opportunity to teach pre-school age children and their parents about the importance of being prepared to read once they enter school. Salt Lake County’s library system offered 2,397 storytimes to 85,630 children and parents in 2013. The library’s storytimes are geared toward development stages and are based on early literacy concepts which have been organized into a program called Utah Kids Ready to Read. Simply stated they are Talking, Signing, Reading, Writing, and Playing. Pre-reader summer programs also encourage parents to participate with their pre-school age children by reading to them so they can earn prizes and a free, age appropriate book.

Child Care Programs (Ages 2-5) are daycare programs offered at multiple Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation facilities and comply with state licensing requirements. Children are engaged in a variety of daily activities and meals and snacks are provided to all children.

Preschool Programs (Ages 3-5) The Pay for Success Preschool Program was implemented in August 2013 as a public-private partnership between Goldman Sachs, J.B. & M.K. Pritzker, United Way of Salt Lake, Granite School District and Salt Lake County to expand Granite School district’s high quality preschool model by 600 students. The Pay for Success Preschool Program is a sustainable funding model that leverages private investments to support the expansion of Preschool Programs in Granite School District. By leveraging private investments now, reductions in special education spending can be reinvested in preschool programs to serve more at-risk children. The Pay for Success Preschool Program is now offered in 25 preschools in Granite School District and four private preschools.

Out-of-school-time (OST) (Ages 5-12 and 13-18) activities include programming that occurs outside of the traditional school-day. Programming can occur before school, after school, weekends, holidays, and when youth are off track. “Participation in various structured out-of-school time activities has been shown to have the greatest impact and most positive effect on those who are most at-risk. Research suggests that out-of-school

time programs can benefit youth socially, emotionally and academically, however those who participate more frequently and for longer periods of time are most likely to benefit from out-of-school time opportunities.”⁶ Youth Services, Library Services and USU Extension 4-H provide OST programming directly and/or partner with other organizations providing these services. The Office of Regional Development provides contractual funding to various programs to fill gaps in OST programs such as extending an afterschool program several hours a week or adding an instructor to increase capacity.

Summer Learning programs (Ages 5-12) have positive outcomes and can close the achievement/opportunity gap that occurs with the *summer slide* or *summer learning loss* that disproportionately affects low-income students. Summer programming includes summer camps, as well as summer school (credit recovery). Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation and USU 4-H Extension offer programs June through August for children attending schools with a traditional schedule. Activities range from arts and crafts, games, sports, science, youth leadership and cooking to field trips. Meals and snacks are typically provided at State licensed summer camp programs.

General Support applies to all other categories of service that provide formal programming. General support includes in school-time mentoring by Aging and Adult Services’ Foster Grandparents or one-on-one tutoring by RSVP volunteers, the afterschool computer literacy program provided by the Community Access to Technology Labs. Programs are also available through the Clark Planetarium, and many of USU Extension’s 4H programs.

Where do we go from here?

Even though our contributions are great, much can be done to improve and continue supporting education in Salt Lake County. In partnership with our community stakeholders, we present these recommendations for your consideration:

1. ***Collectively make an impact on children and families in Salt Lake County through a shared vision and common agenda:***
 - All children and families in Salt Lake County, regardless of circumstance, will have access to opportunities that support social and emotional health, academic success, career readiness and success in life
 - Emphasize the importance of early childhood development by incorporating evidence based programs and best practices when possible
 - Sponsor a follow up summit with decision makers and key stakeholders to define our common agenda
 - Create an ongoing steering committee to ensure accountability for our shared vision
 - Help families access programs and services that can make a difference in their lives

⁶ <http://www.niost.org/pdf/factsheet2009.pdf>

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- Conduct regular needs assessments to ensure needs of increasingly diverse communities are being met
2. ***Continue collaborating with others supporting education to leverage funding and maximize impact***
- Salt Lake County should continue collaborating internally and with organizations such as Head Start, private providers, United Way, Voices for Utah Children, Department of Workforce Services, and the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) to leverage funding in communities identified as having the lowest income, highest rates of intergenerational poverty, lowest academic performance
 - Develop criteria to ensure those most in need of services receive them
 - Expand the Community Learning Center model in Salt Lake County
 - Community Learning Centers are a hub for services such as OST programs, ESL and adult education classes, health related services, counseling, and parental engagement in school
3. ***Expand access to programs through innovative partnerships and funding mechanisms***
- Explore creative financing options such as the one used in the Pay for Success preschool program which demonstrates the feasibility of using results based financing to expand OST and other programs
 - Work with local schools and school districts to expand after school programming in junior high schools to improve the numbers of children successfully transitioning to high school
4. ***New and existing resources should support quality programs based in research and documented best practices that are consistent with our shared vision and common agenda for Supporting Education***
- Expand best practices training opportunities for non-formal educational providers (pre-K through 12th grade), who often lack the skills/tools essential in delivering desired quality programming.
 - Salt Lake County should support implementation of best practices such as:
 - a) Utah Afterschool Network Quality Tools
 - b) National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
 - c) The National Center for Quality Afterschool and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) created *A Practitioner's Guide: Building and Managing Quality Afterschool Programs*
 - d) Create business advisory groups to sponsor and guide curriculum subject matter development for real life application
 - e) Research the feasibility of developing a robust online resource for sharing of research and best practices including identifying existing resources

5. ***Develop system wide outcome measures so resources go to programs that make the biggest difference***

- Identify common data elements such as assessment scores, grades, attendance, suspensions, teacher feedback, parent feedback, graduation rates, etc.
- Include the requirement to share data in contracts generated by Salt Lake County
- Participate in the Utah Data Alliance, or other groups, working to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of education outcomes

6. ***Engage parents wherever possible to ensure healthy families and successful outcomes for children***

- Collect best practices for engaging parents in all programs
- Partner with ethnic community organizations to decrease language and cultural barriers and increase access to services
- Require parental engagement strategies as a component of all programs

7. ***Create a department level position to ensure recommendations are implemented and evaluated***

Create a department level position within Human Services to ensure that our efforts are aligned and adhere to best practices. This position will serve as a convener of internal and external stakeholders and be accountable for implementing and evaluating these efforts county-wide. Major responsibilities include:

- Assessing programs to evaluate their effectiveness in serving the needs of youth and the families they serve
- Ensuring Salt Lake County programs are high quality and attain their objectives by using best practices and state standards
- Developing strategic, lasting, professional relationships with internal and external stakeholders
- Creating collaborative social innovation strategies to achieve our common vision
- Coordinating professional development training for Salt Lake County staff and providers
- Share information about best practices, and expand collaborative efforts between all stakeholders
- Advise the Mayor and other stakeholders about federal, state and local policy issues and provide recommendations as appropriate
- Provide regional support to funding recipients and funders to maximize the use of resources, including match for federal and state dollars