

BEST BUDDIES®



# BESTBUDDIES

## in Utah

Best Buddies seeks \$50,000 per year in ongoing funding to support and expand school-based programs for students with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**Best Buddies International** is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development, and inclusive living for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

### Who We Serve

The IDD community that Best Buddies serves includes, but is not limited to, people with Down syndrome, autism, Fragile X, Williams syndrome, cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury and other undiagnosed disabilities.



Katie and Katrelle  
Friendship program participants

### Annual Survey Results

71%

of high school participants with IDD reported feeling more connected to their school because of Best Buddies.

83%

of high school participants with IDD reported Best Buddies made their school more inclusive

91%

of middle school chapter advisors report Best Buddies has made their school more inclusive.

### The Need

- There were **3,328** Utahns with intellectual disabilities enrolled in public schools statewide in 2022, and 91% of them spent most of their day separated from their typical peers. (*US Department of Education, 2022*).
- In fact, **only 8.98%** of Utah students with intellectual disabilities spent most of their day in inclusive settings. This is **12% lower** than the national average and lower than 40 other states. (*US Department of Education, 2022*).
- Even when students with and without IDD do share a classroom, they **rarely interact with each other**, since students with IDD frequently work alone or separated from typical peers. (*Carter, 2017*).

### Key Program Statistics

- In Utah, Best Buddies has chapters at **nine schools**.
- Our chapters serve **529** participants, positively impacting the lives of over 5,000 people.

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[BESTBUDDIES.ORG/UTAH](https://bestbuddies.org/utah)



Best Buddies has been identified as a Peer-Mediated Instruction & Intervention evidence-based practice that supports inclusion (Steinbrenner et al, 2020). Expanding Best Buddies programs to new schools is a time-tested and cost-effective way to connect students with and without IDD in meaningful, positive social relationships. This project will create opportunities for community-based inclusion, subsequently providing the environment in which students with and without IDD develop vital social skills needed for successful post-secondary outcomes like college and careers. (Steinbrenner et al, 2020).

Anne and Payton  
Friendship program  
participants



"In the short time we've known each other, Anne and I have become as close as sisters. Our friendship has allowed us to gain confidence in ourselves and inspire each other."

- Payton

**BESTBUDDIES** provides opportunities for students with IDD to have meaningful interactions with their typical peers. These increased opportunities for social engagement and the development of positive relationships with peers are associated with positive employment outcomes. (Holwerda et al. 2013 as cited in Scheef et al. 2017)

**BESTBUDDIES Middle Schools & High Schools** Foster one-to-one friendships between middle and high school students with and without IDD. In this time of heightened social and emotional development that can be difficult even for teenagers without IDD, the Best Buddies Middle School and High Schools programs helps break through social barriers at an important time in a young person's life..

**BESTBUDDIES Colleges** Fosters one-to-one friendships between college students without IDD and their peers on campus or in the community with IDD. Young adults with IDD historically have been isolated at home or in work environments. The Best Buddies Colleges program is changing this by providing the opportunity for people with IDD to be involved in their local campus and community life.

## 2023—2024 Participating Schools

### Middle Schools

Wahlquist Junior High School

### High Schools

Cyprus High School  
Granger High School  
Murray High School  
Northridge High School  
Provo Center for Advanced  
Professional studies

### Colleges

Brigham Young University  
Utah State University  
University of Utah