A Limited Review of

Public Education Governance and Metrics

LEGISLATIVE
AUDITOR GENERAL
1975 - 2025

LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR GENERAL

50

1975 - 2025

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May 20, 2025

TO: THE UTAH STATE LEGISLATURE

Transmitted herewith is our report:

"A Limited Review of Public Education Governance and Metrics" [Report #2025-A].

An audit summary is found at the front of the report. The scope and objectives of the audit are included in the audit summary.

We will be happy to meet with appropriate legislative committees, individual legislators, and other state officials to discuss any item contained in the report.

Sincerely,

Kade R. Minchey, CIA, CFE

Auditor General

kminchey@le.utah.gov

Table of Contents

OLAG DASHBOARD

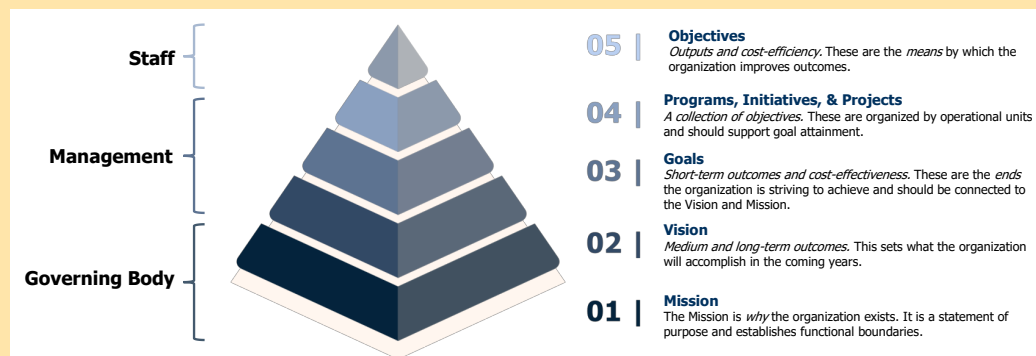# GOVERANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

▶ BACKGROUND

Our dashboard focuses primarily on the legislative perspective for governing the public education system. We acknowledge that there are a variety of perspectives on what the mission and goals of public education ought to be, including those set by USBE and local school boards. Our dashboard does not attempt to capture all of these. USBE and local school boards may build on these measures.

This dashboard displays student performance metrics such as proficiency and growth. These are high level metrics to look at how an LEA is improving. Ultimately, these metrics relate to the mission and vision of education. Other governing bodies and management teams may choose to expand upon the measures we outline based on unique challenges and local goals.

Public education is uniquely structured in Utah government. There are four principal governing bodies: the Utah Legislature, the Utah State Board of Education (USBE), the local school board (LSBs), and the Governor. These four governing bodies set the mission, vision, and values of the public education system, though each plays a different role.

A healthy governance structure is built on the foundation of an active governing body that clearly establishes the organization's mission, vision, and values. Management executes the mission and vision through strategic planning, implementation of programs and initiatives, and evaluation of the organization's operations. The governing body should approve strategic plan and monitor operations, holding management accountable for results. The following figure illustrates the relationship between organizational levels and the roles and responsibilities they hold.

GOOD GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Staff

Management

Governing Body

05 | **Objectives**
Outputs and cost-efficiency. These are the *means* by which the organization improves outcomes.

04 | **Programs, Initiatives, & Projects**
A collection of objectives. These are organized by operational units and should support goal attainment.

03 | **Goals**
Short-term outcomes and cost-effectiveness. These are the *ends* the organization is striving to achieve and should be connected to the Vision and Mission.

02 | **Vision**
Medium and long-term outcomes. This sets what the organization will accomplish in the coming years.

01 | **Mission**
The Mission is *why* the organization exists. It is a statement of purpose and establishes functional boundaries.

Source: Auditor Generated from The Best Practice Handbook, 2023

REPORT SUMMARY

Legislative Mission and Vision

As outlined in **Utah Code** 53E-2-301(2):

"The Legistature recognizes that public education's mission is to assure Utah the best educated citizenry in the world and each individual the training to succeed in a global society by providing students with:

a) learning and occupational skills;

b) character development;

c) literacy and numeracy;

d) high quality instruction;

e) curriculum based on high standards and relevance; and

f) effective assessment to inform high istruction and accountibility."

Dashboard

In the dashboard we show performance and growth in grades K-3, 3-10, ACT, and graduation. We also consider spending decisions as an indicator of how LEAs are going about accomplishing the mission and vision of public education. We also consider decisions on how taxpayer funds are spent as an indicator of how LEAs are going about accomplishing the mission and vision of public education to ensure return on investment for taxpayers. Therefore, we include spending data in our dashboards.

Click or Scan for *School District Dashboard*

Dashboard Preview

This image shows the high level dashboard. There are additional dashboards that can be navigated to via the buttons on the top ribbon. These allow a deeper look at performance by grade level.

Overall Summary

District Name	Avg. % Proficient (K-3)	Avg. % Proficient (3-10)	% 18+ Composite ACT Score	Grad Percent	Instruction Spending per pupil	Legislative Performance Metrics Met
Alpine District	67%	50%	69%	91%	$7,161	2 of 7
Beaver District	79%	47%	59%	98%	$9,119	3 of 7
Box Elder District	75%	41%	58%	87%	$7,722	2 of 7
Cache District	72%	55%	71%	95%	$7,293	4 of 7
Canyons District	70%	51%	73%	88%	$7,268	2 of 7
Carbon District	64%	43%	48%	79%	$9,225	1 of 7
Daggett District	78%	46%	Null	Null	$20,670	3 of 7
Davis District	66%	46%	66%	93%	$7,800	3 of 7
Duchesne District	61%	34%	51%	83%	$8,391	2 of 7
Emery District	68%	41%	47%	89%	$9,608	2 of 7
Garfield District	60%	38%	58%	90%	$7,414	2 of 7
Grand District	44%	29%	46%	85%	$10,126	1 of 7
Granite District	57%	32%	45%	79%	$7,056	2 of 7
Iron District	66%	49%	67%	91%	$6,220	2 of 7
Jordan District	59%	43%	66%	90%	$6,782	1 of 7
Juab District	66%	38%	55%	97%	$8,901	3 of 7
Kane District	75%	51%	68%	97%	$9,169	3 of 7
Logan City District	73%	37%	56%	91%	$8,328	2 of 7
Millard District	65%	52%	60%	94%	$9,822	3 of 7
Morgan District	81%	55%	65%	93%	$7,672	3 of 7
Murray District	68%	44%	59%	83%	$8,075	2 of 7
Nebo District	62%	43%	63%	94%	$6,083	3 of 7
North Sanpete District	67%	41%	57%	83%	$8,332	2 of 7
North Summit District	81%	59%	68%	91%	$11,126	3 of 7
Ogden City District	46%	26%	33%	89%	$7,245	1 of 7
Park City District	81%	61%	73%	96%	$13,125	5 of 7

Chapter 1
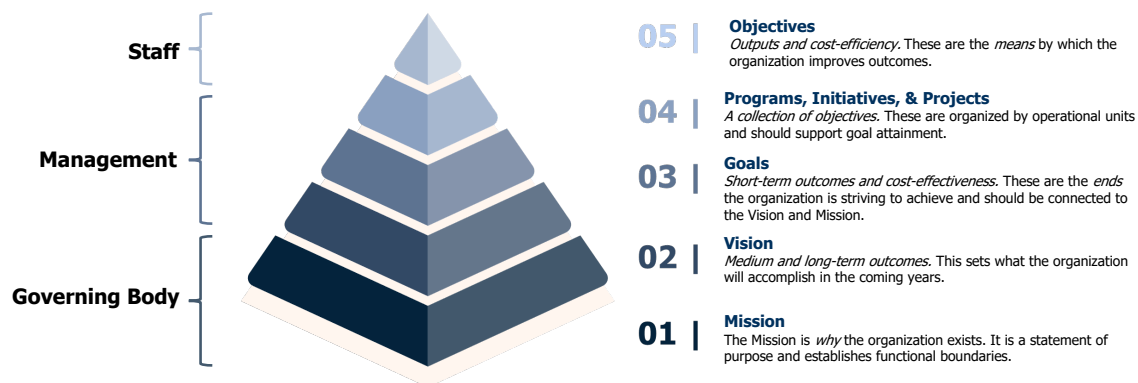## Local Education Agency Outcome Dashboard
1.1 Results-Based Accountability Is the Role of a Governing Body

A healthy governance structure is built on the foundation of an active governing body that clearly establishes the organization's mission, vision, and values. Management executes the mission and vision through strategic planning, implementation of programs and initiatives, and evaluation of the organization's operations. The governing body should approve strategic plans and monitor operations, holding management accountable for results. The following figure illustrates the relationship between organizational levels and the roles and responsibilities they hold.

Click or Scan for *School District Dashboard*

Figure 1.1 Governing Bodies Set the Mission, Vision, and Values for the Organization. Management executes the mission and vision, while the governing board holds management accountable for results. Management delegates work to staff and monitors performance.

Staff

Management

Governing Body

05 | **Objectives**
Outputs and cost-efficiency. These are the *means* by which the organization improves outcomes.

04 | **Programs, Initiatives, & Projects**
A collection of objectives. These are organized by operational units and should support goal attainment.

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Short-term outcomes and cost-effectiveness. These are the *ends* the organization is striving to achieve and should be connected to the Vision and Mission.

02 | **Vision**
Medium and long-term outcomes. This sets what the organization will accomplish in the coming years.

01 | **Mission**
The Mission is *why* the organization exists. It is a statement of purpose and establishes functional boundaries.

Source: The Best Practice Handbook, 2023.

Governing bodies set the mission, vision, and values of the organization, and hold management accountable for results.

As seen in the figure, it is the responsibility of the governing body to broadly establish the structures necessary to direct, guide, and monitor the organization. Management is responsible for setting goals that, if achieved, will realize the mission and vision of the organization. It does this through implementation of programs and initiatives, and delegation to operational staff. Staff adhere to policies

and procedures and carry out much of the production and service delivery of the organization.

Public Education Governance

Public education is uniquely structured in Utah government. There are four principal governing bodies: the Utah Legislature, the Utah State Board of Education (USBE), local school boards (LSBs), and the Governor.[1] These four governing bodies set the mission, vision, and values of the public education system, though each plays a different role. The Legislature appropriates funding and has set the broadest goals for the system. The Legislature is responsible for holding local school communities "accountable for results."[2] USBE is vested with "general control and supervision of the public education system" by the **Utah Constitution**.[3] USBE has general control and supervision of the public education system. They set both the standards and the strategic direction for the public education system. LSBs governs school districts at the local level and have statutory authority for taxes, staffing, capital facilities, boundaries, and school management. The Governor's role is limited to budget recommendations, and general and line-item veto authority. **Utah Code** also grants the Governor authority to appoint members of the State Charter School Board. Public education's mission is "carried out through a responsive educational system that guarantees local school communities' autonomy, flexibility, and client choice."[4]

Each governing board can and should hold smaller units of the organization accountable for the results it has determined to be of significance. At the same time, each governing body should allow discretion to determine the unique needs faced by each unit of government, and how to address their
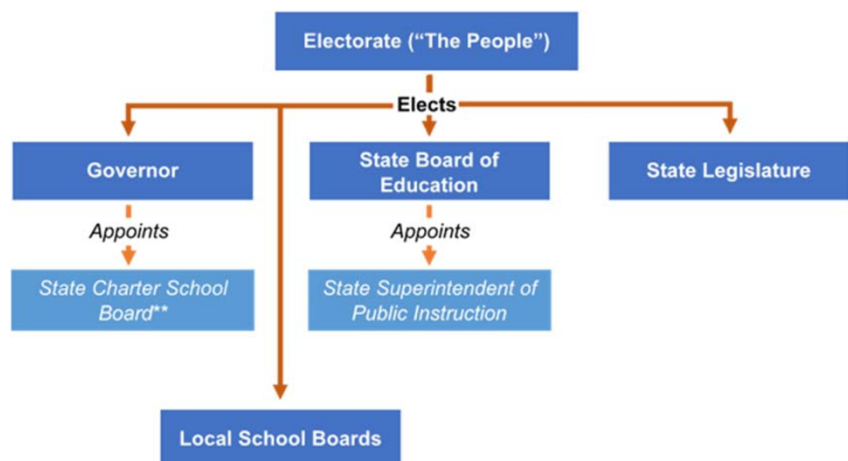
** The governing board of individual charter schools are not elected like local school district boards.

Source: Auditor Generated

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[1] Other governing bodies also play a role. However, we focus on these four as they describe the core drivers of the public education system and act as a sort of nested governance structure.
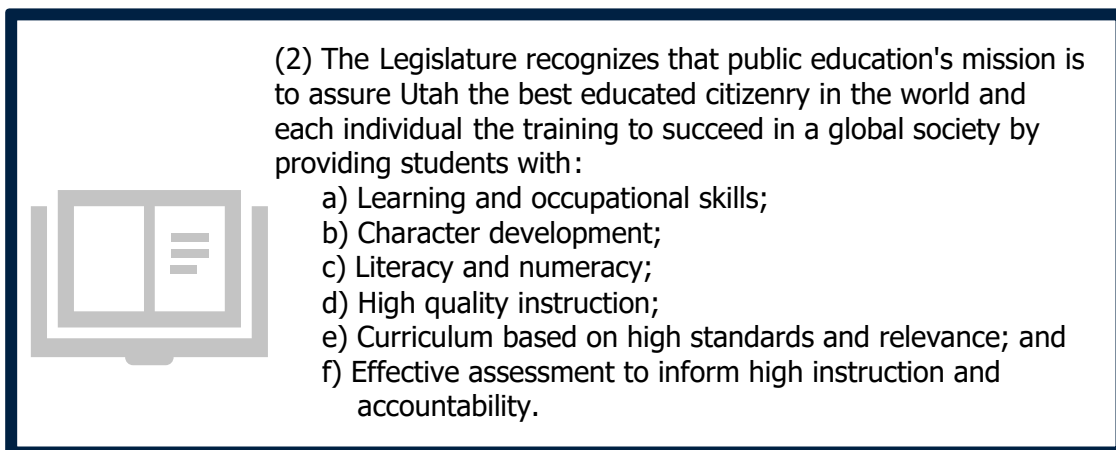
[2] **Utah Code** 53E-2-301 (3)(c)

[3] **Utah Constitution**, Article X, Section 3

[4] **Utah Code** 53E-2-301 (3)(c)

distinct challenges. While each level of governance plays an essential role in setting mission and direction, for the purposes of this report, we focus on high level learning and achievement.

Our dashboard focuses primarily on the legislative perspective for governing the public education system. We acknowledge that there are a variety of perspectives on what the mission and goals of public education ought to be, including those set by USBE and LSBs. Our dashboard does not attempt to capture all of these. USBE and LSBs may build on these measures. The following lists several of the goals of public education, as outlined in **Utah Code**.

Figure 1.2 The Legislature has Set the Mission of Public Education as to Assure Utah has the Best Educated Citizenry. *Utah Code* outlines six key outcome to reach the mission the Legislature have outlined.

(2) The Legislature recognizes that public education's mission is to assure Utah the best educated citizenry in the world and each individual the training to succeed in a global society by providing students with:
    a) Learning and occupational skills;
    b) Character development;
    c) Literacy and numeracy;
    d) High quality instruction;
    e) Curriculum based on high standards and relevance; and
    f) Effective assessment to inform high instruction and accountability.

Source: **Utah Code** 53E-2-301 (2).

We also consider decisions on how taxpayer funds are spent as an indicator of how LEAs are going about accomplishing the mission and vision of public education to ensure return on investment for taxpayers. Costs are a crucial consideration in how districts use funds. Therefore, we include spending data in our dashboards.

1.2 Dashboard Purpose

Our dashboard displays student performance metrics of proficiency, growth, and spending. These are high level metrics to look at how a district is improving. Ultimately, these metrics relate to governance and decisions. Other governing bodies and management teams may choose to expand upon the measures we outline based on unique challenges and local goals. The dashboard is organized into two main sections: performance and spending.

Performance

The performance section allows you to explore several dashboards covering academic performance across different grade levels: Overall, Grades K-3, Grades 3-10, and ACT scores. Each grade level or area has a dedicated dashboard, allowing you to analyze district performance in detail. Use the icons at the top of each page to switch between sections.

Overall Summary. This section is a high-level look at performance and spending, allowing the user to compare districts across the state. It shows the average proficiency of all tested subjects. For a more detailed look, the user can navigate to K-3, 3-10, ACT, and graduation rates to see more details over time.

K-3. This uses Acadience test data to examine performance and achievement for early learning. While the Acadience test can be given to grades 4-6, our dashboard only focuses on results for K-3. Acadience only tests literacy and numeracy.

3-10. This summarizes performance for grades 3-10 using RISE and Utah Aspire Plus tests. RISE is comprised of English language arts, math, and science for grades 3-8 (science is tested starting in 4th grade). Utah Aspire Plus is used in grades 9 and 10, testing students in English, math, and science.

ACT & Graduation Rates (11-12). All students take the ACT in 11th grade. Graduation rates are used to look at achievement for students in 12th grade.
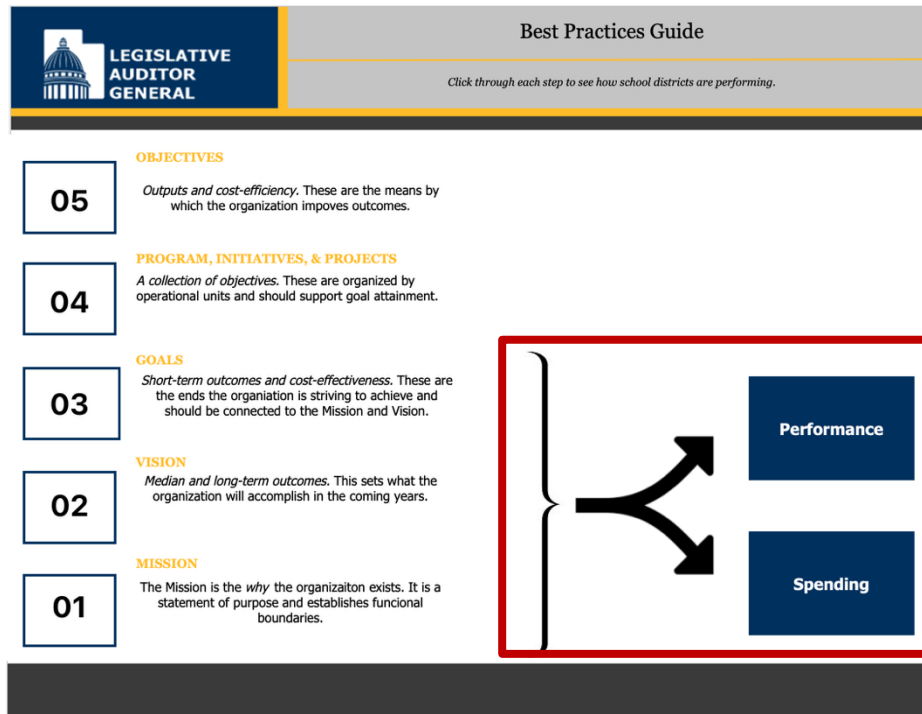
Spending

This dashboard provides insight into financial aspects and retention of districts. The included figures address the following topics:

- Expenditures by District: View of how each school district allocates its budget.

- Teacher Retention Rates: Examine trends in teacher retention to understand stability within each district. This metric relates to high quality instruction as shown in Figure 1.2.

Navigating the Dashboard

Main Navigation: Use the navigation buttons (highlighted with red box) on this page to access the performance and spending dashboards.

Best Practices Guide

Click through each step to see how school districts are performing.

OBJECTIVES

05 — *Outputs and cost-efficiency.* These are the means by which the organization impoves outcomes.

PROGRAM, INITIATIVES, & PROJECTS

04 — *A collection of objectives.* These are organized by operational units and should support goal attainment.

GOALS

03 — *Short-term outcomes and cost-effectiveness.* These are the ends the organiation is striving to achieve and should be connected to the Mission and Vision.

VISION

02 — *Median and long-term outcomes.* This sets what the organization will accomplish in the coming years.

MISSION

01 — The Mission is the *why* the organizaiton exists. It is a statement of purpose and establishes funcional boundaries.

Performance

Spending

Dashboard Navigation: Each dashboard includes navigation buttons to move between related dashboards within the same section or return to the main navigation page.

HOME Overall ACT/Grad K-3 3-10

Overall Summary

District Name	Avg. % Proficient (K-3)	Avg. % Proficient (3-10)	% 18+ Composite ACT Score	Grad Percent	Instruction Spending per pupil	Legislative Performance Metrics Met
Alpine District	67%	50%	69%	91%	$6,870	2 of 7
Beaver District	79%	47%	59%	98%	$8,853	3 of 7
Box Elder District	75%	41%	58%	87%	$7,445	2 of 7
Cache District	72%	55%	71%	95%	$7,058	4 of 7
Canyons District	70%	51%	73%	88%	$5,805	2 of 7
Carbon District	64%	43%	48%	79%	$8,786	1 of 7
Daggett District	78%	46%	Null	Null	$16,860	3 of 7
Davis District	66%	46%	66%	93%	$7,594	3 of 7
Duchesne District	61%	34%	51%	83%	$7,886	2 of 7
Emery District	68%	41%	47%	89%	$9,024	2 of 7
Garfield District	60%	38%	58%	90%	$7,158	2 of 7
Grand District	44%	29%	46%	85%	$9,751	1 of 7
Granite District	57%	32%	45%	79%	$6,290	2 of 7
Iron District	66%	49%	67%	91%	$5,840	2 of 7
Jordan District	59%	43%	66%	90%	$6,587	1 of 7
Juab District	66%	38%	55%	97%	$4,742	3 of 7
Kane District	75%	51%	68%	97%	$8,682	3 of 7
Logan City District	73%	37%	56%	91%	$7,889	2 of 7
Millard District	65%	52%	60%	94%	$9,333	3 of 7
Morgan District	81%	55%	65%	93%	$7,533	3 of 7
Murray District	68%	44%	59%	83%	$7,872	2 of 7
Nebo District	62%	43%	63%	94%	$5,811	3 of 7
North Sanpete District	67%	41%	57%	83%	$7,591	2 of 7
North Summit District	81%	59%	68%	91%	$10,866	3 of 7
Ogden City District	46%	26%	33%	89%	$7,040	1 of 7
Park City District	81%	61%	73%	96%	$11,632	5 of 7
Piute District	74%	33%	Null	Null	$15,336	3 of 7

Filters:

Performance Dashboards: Filter charts by school district or subject area to tailor the data to your interests.

District Spending Dashboard: Filter by school district to view expenditure data relevant to specific districts.

Legislative Performance Metrics: On each dashboard there is a summary of how many of the selected Legislative Performance Metrics a district has met. Auditors focused on the following eleven metrics:

- 4-year cohort graduation rate
- Percent of students making typical or higher growth on math
- Percent of students making typical or higher growth on reading
- Percent of students proficient on RISE ELA
- Percent of students proficient on RISE science
- Percent of students proficient on RISE math

An example of the metrics is shown on the left. The eleven metrics chosen are tied to Acadience Testing, RISE testing, ACT, and Graduation rates.

Legislative Performance Metrics Met

2 of 7

Appendix

A. Utah Districts Dashboard

Overall Summary

District Name	Avg. % Proficient (K-3)	Avg. % Proficient (3-10)	% 18+ Composite ACT Score	Grad Percent	Instruction Spending per pupil	Legislative Performance Metrics Met
Alpine District	67%	50%	69%	91%	$7,161	2 of 7
Beaver District	79%	47%	59%	98%	$9,119	3 of 7
Box Elder District	75%	41%	58%	87%	$7,722	2 of 7
Cache District	72%	55%	71%	95%	$7,293	4 of 7
Canyons District	70%	51%	73%	88%	$7,268	2 of 7
Carbon District	64%	43%	48%	79%	$9,225	1 of 7
Daggett District	78%	46%	Null	Null	$20,670	3 of 7
Davis District	66%	46%	66%	93%	$7,800	3 of 7
Duchesne District	61%	34%	51%	83%	$8,391	2 of 7
Emery District	68%	41%	47%	89%	$9,608	2 of 7
Garfield District	60%	38%	58%	90%	$7,414	2 of 7
Grand District	44%	29%	46%	85%	$10,126	1 of 7
Granite District	57%	32%	45%	79%	$7,056	2 of 7
Iron District	66%	49%	67%	91%	$6,220	2 of 7
Jordan District	59%	43%	66%	90%	$6,782	1 of 7
Juab District	66%	38%	55%	97%	$8,901	3 of 7
Kane District	75%	51%	68%	97%	$9,169	3 of 7
Logan City District	73%	37%	56%	91%	$8,328	2 of 7
Millard District	65%	52%	60%	94%	$9,822	3 of 7
Morgan District	81%	55%	65%	93%	$7,672	3 of 7
Murray District	68%	44%	59%	83%	$8,075	2 of 7
Nebo District	62%	43%	63%	94%	$6,083	3 of 7
North Sanpete District	67%	41%	57%	83%	$8,332	2 of 7
North Summit District	81%	59%	68%	91%	$11,126	3 of 7
Ogden City District	46%	26%	33%	89%	$7,245	1 of 7
Park City District	81%	61%	73%	96%	$13,125	5 of 7
Piute District	74%	33%	Null	Null	$17,326	2 of 7

Filters

District Names	Subject
SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN UTAH	Literacy

SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN UTAH (K-3 Literacy)

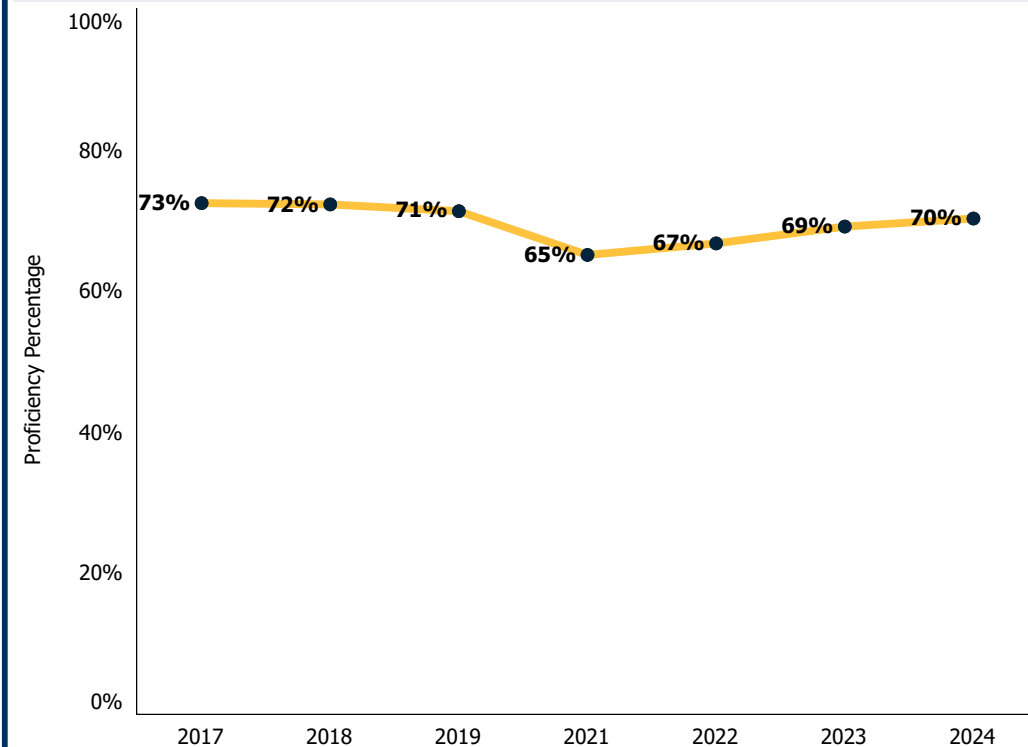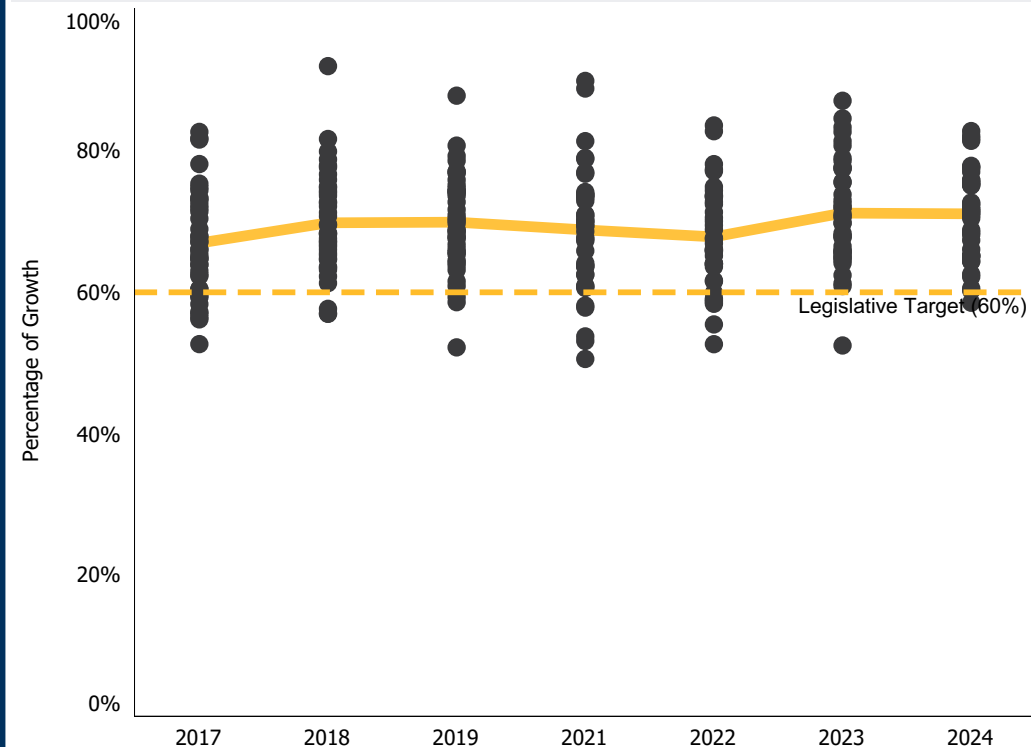| Legislative Performance Metrics Met	Total Schools	Total Students	English Learner	Economically Disadvataged	Minority Students	Special Education
2 of 7	912 ↓	592,467 ↓	9% ↑	32% ↓	21% ↑	14% ↑

Percent Proficient K-3

73% 72% 71% 65% 67% 69% 70%
(2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024)

Percent Meeting Growth

Legislative Target (60%)

Legend: 🟥 Below Average 🟦 Above Average 🟨 Average of Districts ⬛ Other Districts

SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN UTAH (K-3 Math)

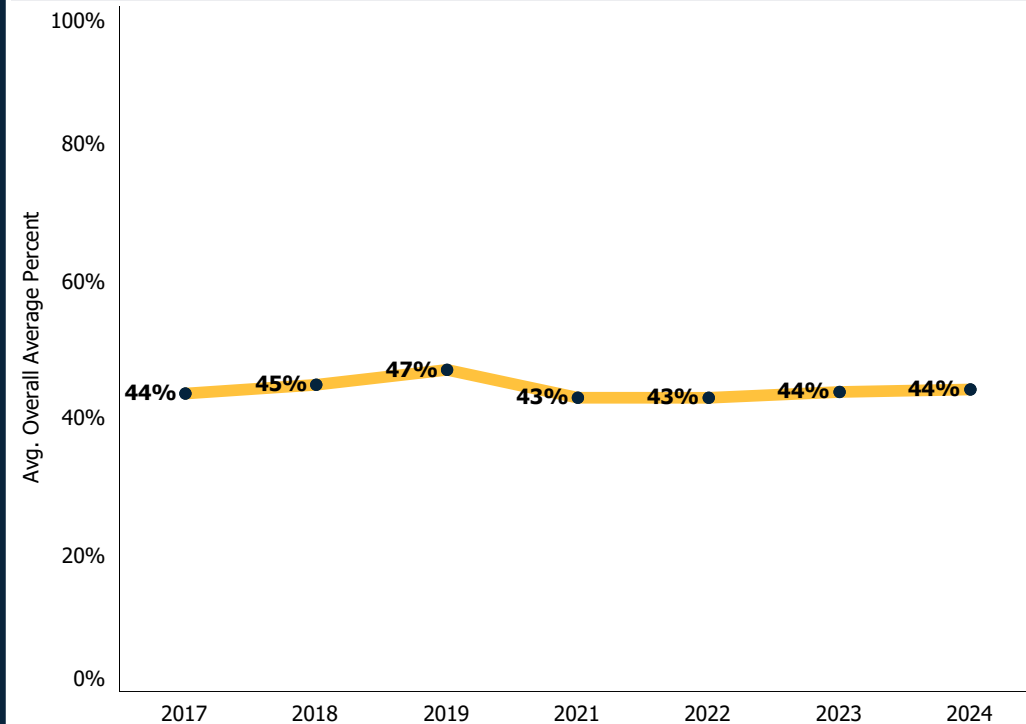| Legislative Performance Metrics Met	Total Schools	Total Students	English Learner	Economically Disadvataged	Minority Students	Special Education
2 of 7	912 ↓	592,467 ↓	9% ↑	32% ↓	21% ↑	14% ↑

Percent Proficient K-3

- 2022: 55%
- 2023: 61%
- 2024: 65%

Percent Meeting Growth

Legislative Target (60%)

Legend: 🟥 Below Average | 🟦 Above Average | 🟧 Average of Districts | ⬜ Other Districts

HOME | Overall | ACT/Grad | K-3 | 3-10

Filters

District Names
SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN UTAH

Subject
Language
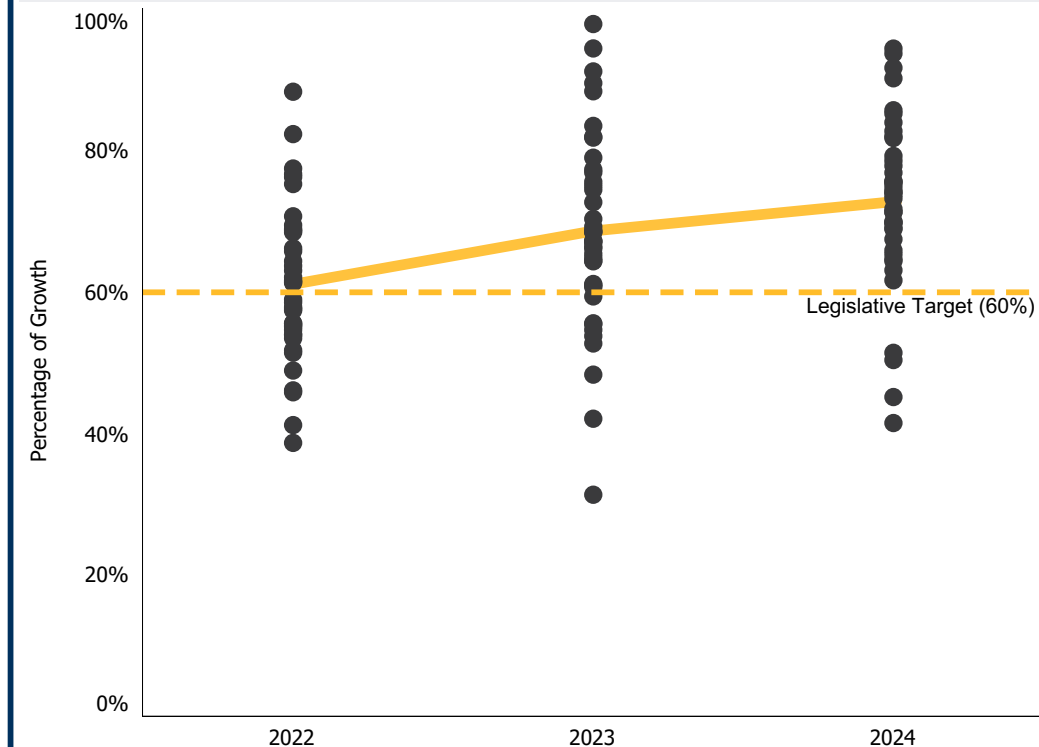
SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN UTAH (3-10 ELA)

Legislative Performance Metrics Met	Total Schools	Total Students	English Learner	Economically Disadvataged	Minority Students	Special Education
2 of 7	912 ↓	592,467 ↓	9% ↑	32% ↓	21% ↑	14% ↑

Percent Proficient 3-10

Avg. Overall Average Percent

- 2017: 44%
- 2018: 45%
- 2019: 47%
- 2021: 43%
- 2022: 43%
- 2023: 44%
- 2024: 44%

Average Student Growth

Median SGP Score — 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
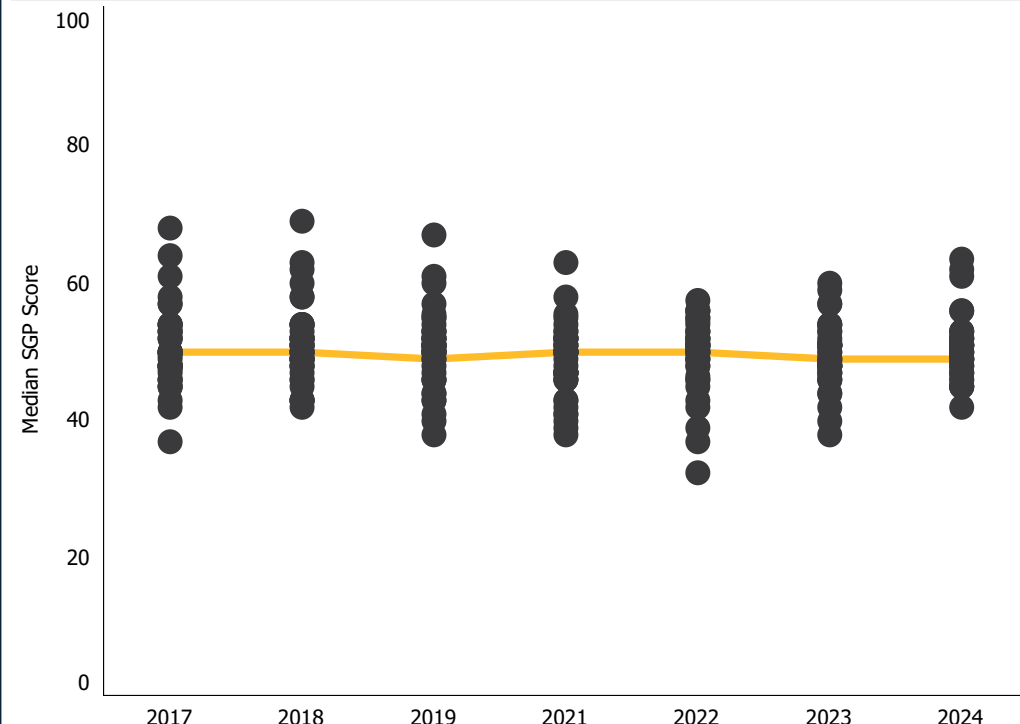
Legend:
- 🟥 Below Average
- 🟦 Above Average
- 🟨 Average of Districts
- ⬛ Other Districts

SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN UTAH (3-10 Math)

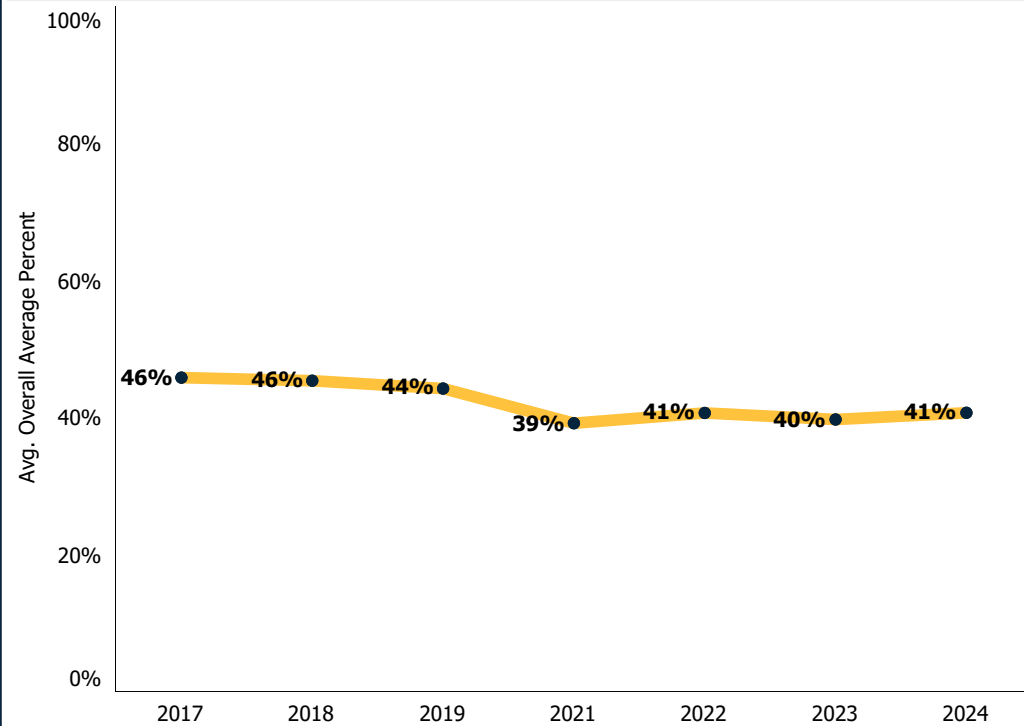| Legislative Performance Metrics Met	Total Schools	Total Students	English Learner	Economically Disadvataged	Minority Students	Special Education
2 of 7	912 ↓	592,467 ↓	9% ↑	32% ↓	21% ↑	14% ↑

Percent Proficient 3-10

Avg. Overall Average Percent

- 2017: 46%
- 2018: 46%
- 2019: 44%
- 2021: 39%
- 2022: 41%
- 2023: 40%
- 2024: 41%

Average Student Growth

Median SGP Score
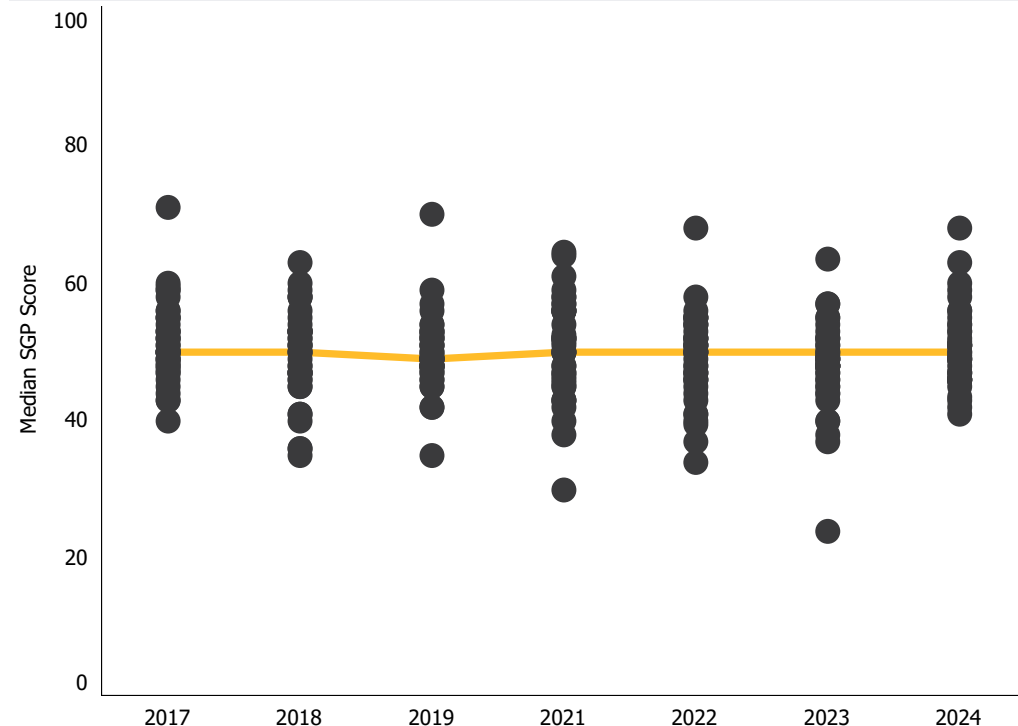
Legend:
- 🟥 Below Average
- 🟦 Above Average
- 🟧 Average of Districts
- ⬛ Other Districts

HOME | Overall | ACT/Grad | K-3 | 3-10

Filters

District Names
SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN UTAH

Subject
Science

SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN UTAH (3-10 Science)

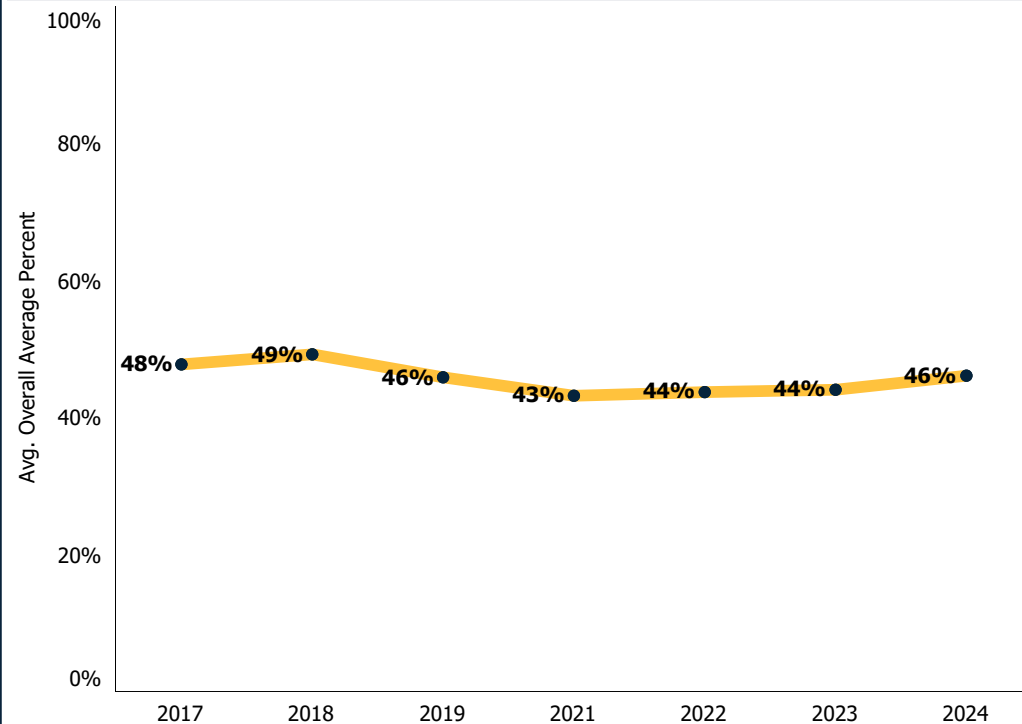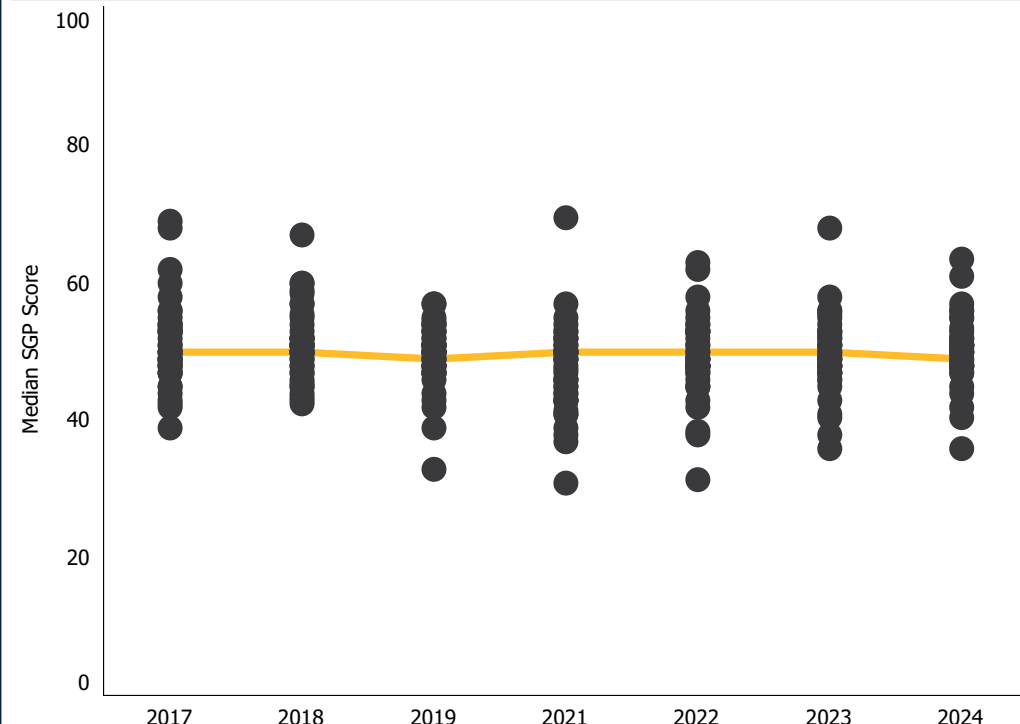| Legislative Performance Metrics Met	Total Schools	Total Students	English Learner	Economically Disadvataged	Minority Students	Special Education
2 of 7	912 ↓	592,467 ↓	9% ↑	32% ↓	21% ↑	14% ↑

Percent Proficient 3-10

48% — 49% — 46% — 43% — 44% — 44% — 46%
(2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024)

Average Student Growth

Legend: ■ Below Average ■ Above Average ■ Average of Districts ■ Other Districts

HOME | Overall | ACT/Grad | K-3 | 3-10

Filters

District Names
SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN UTAH

Subject
Composite Score

SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN UTAH

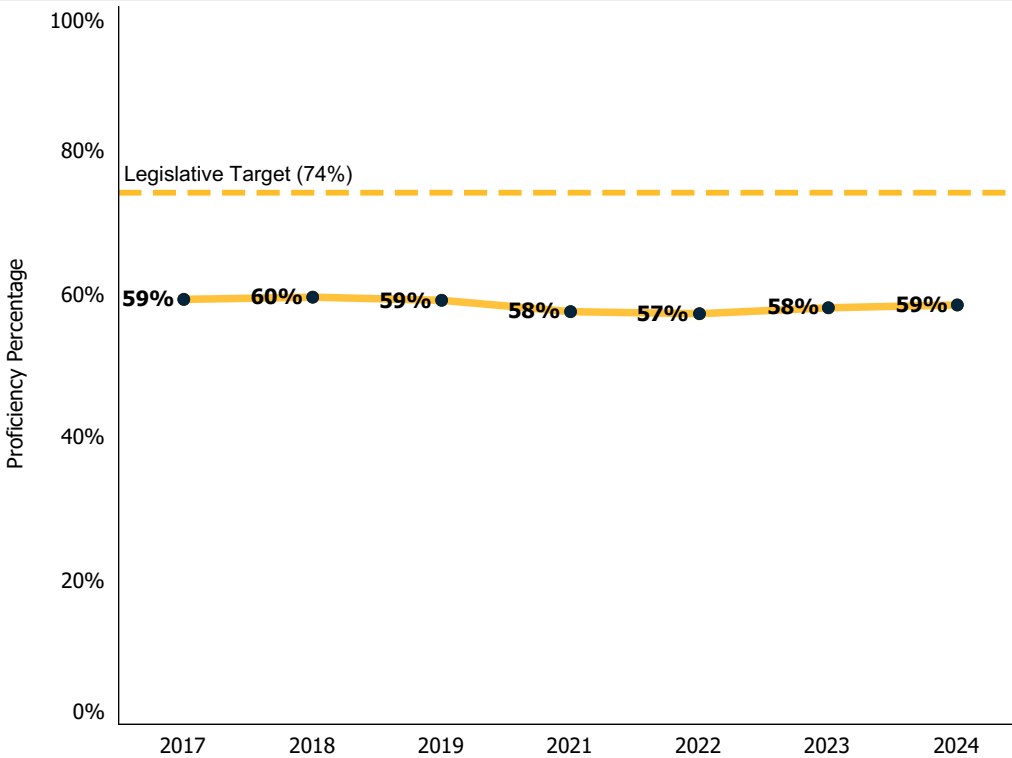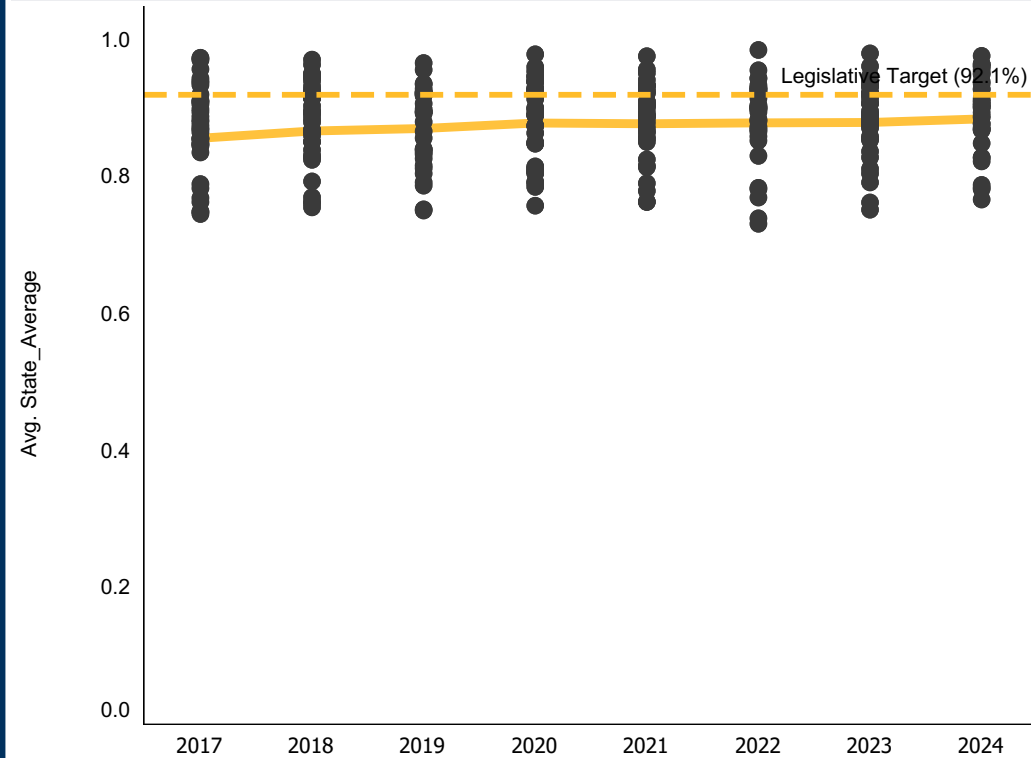| Legislative Performance Metrics Met	Total Schools	Total Students	English Learner	Economically Disadvataged	Minority Students	Special Education
2 of 7	912 ↓	592,467 ↓	9% ↑	32% ↓	21% ↑	14% ↑

Percent Proficient ACT (18+ Compsite Score)

Legislative Target (74%)

59% 60% 59% 58% 57% 58% 59%

Proficiency Percentage

2017 2018 2019 2021 2022 2023 2024

Graduation Percent

Legislative Target (92.1%)

Avg. State_Average

2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024

Legend:
- Above Average (blue)
- Above Average (red)
- Average of Districts (yellow)
- Other Districts (grey)

School District Spending

	Total Schools	Total Students	English Learner	Economically Disadvataged	Minority Students	Special Education
Legislative Performance Metrics Met	912 ▼	592,467 ▼	9% ▲	32% ▼	21% ▲	14% ▲

2 of 7

Classroom Spending				
Instruction	**55%**	$9,233.60	$9,234
Support Services	**9%**	$1,544.1	$1,544

Non-Classroom Spending				
Administration	**11%**	$1,830.3	$1,830
Debt Services	**7%**	$1,236.3	$1,236
Transportation	**4%**	$699.0	$699
Other Services	**15%**	$2,458.3	$2,458

Facility Aquisition and Construction	**$1,332M**	$4,042.8	$4,043
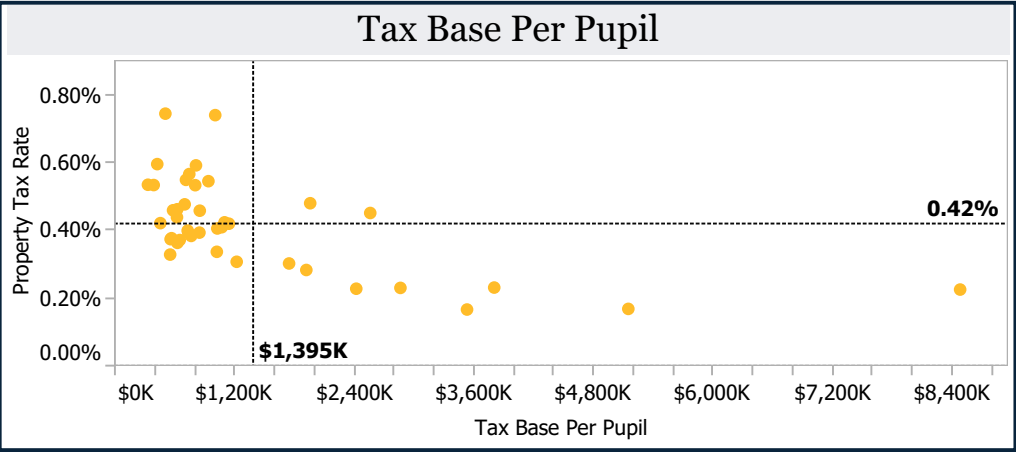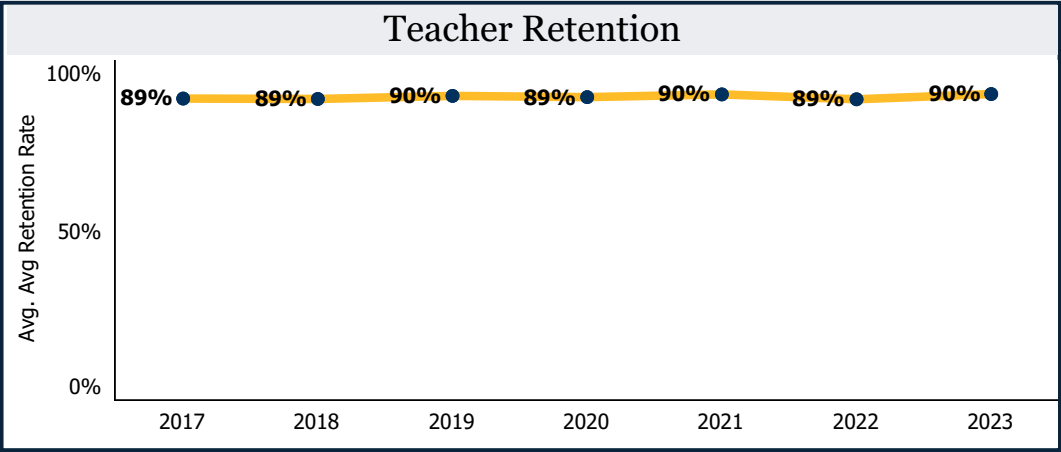
Teacher Retention

Avg. Avg Retention Rate

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
89%	89%	90%	89%	90%	89%	90%

Tax Base Per Pupil

Property Tax Rate

0.42%

$1,395K

Tax Base Per Pupil

Legend:
- 🟥 Below Average
- 🟦 Above Average
- 🟧 Average of Districts
- ⬜ Other Districts

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THE MISSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR GENERAL IS TO

AUDIT · LEAD · ACHIEVE

WE HELP ORGANIZATIONS IMPROVE.