

**Salt Lake Center for Science Education:
A District Dependent Charter School in Partnership with
Salt Lake City School District**

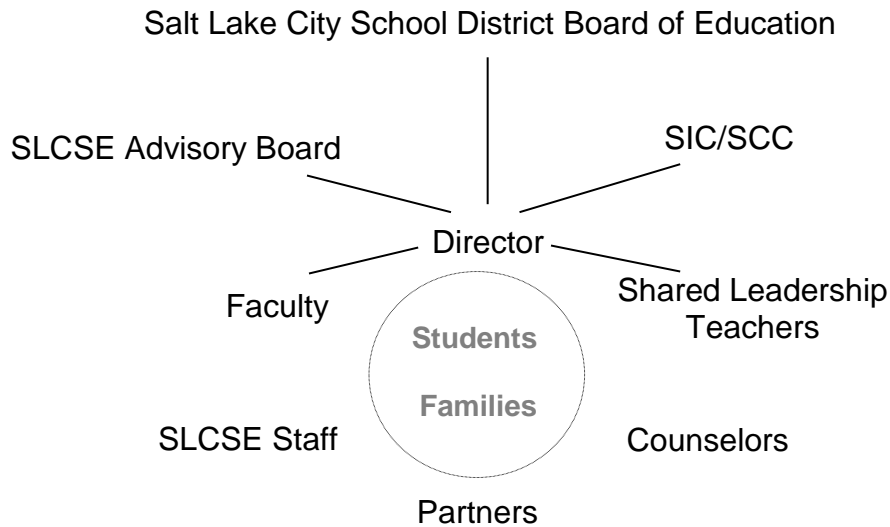
School Information

Name: Salt Lake Center for Science Education
Address: 1400 West Goodwin Avenue
City: Salt Lake City
State: UT
Zip: 84116
Phone: 801-578-8226
Fax: 801-578-8677
Website Address: www.slcese.org
School district: Salt Lake City School District
Grade Levels or Student Ages to be served: Grades 6 – 12
Number of Students to be served: 420

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

1. Administrative Structure:

The Salt Lake Center for Science Education (SLCSE) will operate within the Salt Lake City School District. It will be governed by all the rules, policies, and contracts that apply to any other Salt Lake City School District school. SLCSE will maintain a School Improvement Council and a School Community Council, as outlined in the District's Shared Governance Guide.



2. Governing Board:

The ultimate governing board of the Salt Lake Center for Science Education is the Salt Lake City School District Board of Education. The SLCSD Board has the responsibility for running the school with the same responsibilities as it does for Salt Lake City School District schools.

SLCSE maintains a School Community Council similar to other Salt Lake City School District schools. All parents are invited to participate. The SLCSE Advisory Board consists of a community of scientists, community members, and higher education partners to promote, advise and support the SLCSE mission.

3. Chief Administrative Officer:

The director/principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school. The director/principal is responsible for financial expenditures, hold regular faculty meetings, supervise teachers and other staff, ensure school curriculum meets curriculum required by the State of Utah, implement SLCSE Board decisions and promote the school's mission, philosophy and goals. The principal hires necessary administrative staff as needed and approved by the SLCSE Board. All administrative, university liaisons, facility and teacher staffs report to the director/principal.

Overarching Duties:

- Demonstrates commitment to SLCSE's vision and mission and communicates that vision and mission to school personnel, the students and parents/families, and the community.
- Model school values for students, parents and the Board.
- Function as a visible leader maintaining frequent contact with students, staff, and university partners.
- Exercise a participatory management style with staff.
- Communicate effectively by written and oral methods.
- Foster a climate of innovation and collegiality.
- Facilitate activities for families, staff, and partners to encourage community and shared purpose.

Specific Educational Leadership Duties:

- Participate in the hiring and evaluation of staff.
- Oversee planning and evaluation of programs and sets priorities for programs.
- Coordinate design of curriculum with SLCSE Board, staff, and volunteers.
- Administrate all school-based programs.
- Administer services of resource personnel.
- Assist staff in evaluating their methods and instructional materials.
- Coordinate the design of schedules.
- Develop cooperation and teamwork within staff.
- Assist staff in accommodating individual student needs and abilities.
- Monitor student progress, discipline, health and safety.
- Provide perspective on educational issues with the school's Board on a regular basis.

- Recommend plans for improvement of instruction, school philosophy, and school policies.
- Assist the board in evaluating the school's progress on established priorities.

Community Relations Duties:

- Promote and develop a professional relationship with the school's Board, staff, parents and university partners.
- Seek and considers opinions of others in a timely fashion.
- Provide information to community, media, and interested parties about the school, its programs, and progress towards goals.
- Develop all printed materials needed for the operation of the school.
- Serve in a liaison capacity with requisite State entities on administrative and/or educational matters.
- Assists with the recruiting, scheduling, and training of volunteers within the school.

Managerial Duties:

- Approve and authorize: building usage, budget items, permanent record maintenance, building maintenance, all school-based activities and schedules, purchase and utilization of material resources, equipment, textbooks and supplies.
- Plan and implement the staff development program in conjunction with university partners.
- Delineate all responsibilities and authority, establishing lines of communication and supervision.
- Develop enthusiasm and promote positive morale among staff, parents/families, and university partners.
- Actively lead and participate in the development of the master budget.

4. Parent Involvement:

Parental involvement is crucial to the success of SLCSE. We value and invite parental/family input and feedback. Parents/families are encouraged to be active participants in the school through volunteering, serving on the Salt Lake Center for Science Education Board, working in collaboration with University Neighborhood Partners Projects, and participating in school related activities. Opportunities to participate are communicated to parents/families through a newsletter, SLCSE Facebook, monthly parent informational meetings and school website.

The school provides parents/families the opportunity for hands-on involvement in the education of their children. Parents/families who may not be available to volunteer during school hours may volunteer by participating in activities that may be done at home, in the evenings, or on weekends.

Parents/families are encouraged to volunteer in a number of ways that may include committees, fundraising, office help, field trips, classroom help, tutors, assemblies, and others. A volunteer coordinator oversees volunteerism. The coordinator organizes and plans volunteer schedules, tracks volunteer hours, and disperses volunteer schedules.

All parents/families are encouraged to provide constructive criticism and offer alternatives and/or solutions. Parents/families may be asked to participate in a research committee to study an issue and offer alternatives/solutions to the SLCSE Board for consideration. Parents are invited to spend time classes and provide input to the school through the use of a school generated feedback/evaluation form.

Communication with parents/families is fundamental to the school's success. SLCSE is subject to all State and Federal laws regarding this issue. Parents/families are welcome to visit the school or classroom any time as long as they do not cause a disturbance to classroom instruction. SLCSE follows Policies C-1, Parent and Community Involvement and C-2, Visitors to the School from the Salt Lake City School District Board of Education policies.

5. Communication with Parents:

As parents/families become members of the SLCSE community they always have the opportunity to meet with the director or a staff member that provides initial information, outlines opportunities at the school, and discusses any special needs that may apply to their individual student. A school website, Facebook, and weekly newsletter informs parents/families of opportunities to volunteer at the school, upcoming events, and their individual student's progress. All information is translated into Spanish (other languages on request). For parents/families that do not have internet access at home, there are computers at SLCSE that can be utilized to access information (parent must have an AUP on file with the school).

Parents/families will receive a copy of the Salt Lake Center for Science Education Handbook at the beginning the each school year. The handbook will also be available online. Periodic information is also be sent to parents/families in print form or by automated phone messages to assure that all parents/families are informed on school related opportunities and issues.

Parents/families of the students attending SLCSE are vital to the success and operation of the school. Part of this involvement is taking part in the many opportunities to help establish new and varied ways of improving the school. Parents/families are asked to provide feedback and suggestions through periodic surveys.

Parents/families that have complaints are invited to present them in person or in writing to the Principal and/or the SLCSE Board. Parents/families are encouraged to provide alternatives and suggestions, and may be asked to lead a special committee to research and present options. Alternatively, parents that want to raise an issue anonymously may us the SLCSE School TipLine.

6. Complaints:

Parent/family complaints are taken seriously by SLCSE. Specific complaints are addressed according to the following guidelines:

- Individuals with complaints should initially attempt to resolve the problem by addressing the parties directly involved.
- If disagreements cannot be resolved individually, the Principal may serve as mediator to resolve concerns and facilitate understanding.
- Problems that cannot be resolved with the Principal may be presented to the SLCSE Board for consideration. The issue should be stated in writing and should specify the prior attempts at resolution both individually and with the Principal. The SLCSE Board will investigate the complaint and make a decision according to the student's best interest.

In regards to complaints related to curriculum the school follows Salt Lake City School District Board of Education Policy C-3: Parent or Guardian Concerns about Curriculum or Instructional Materials.

STUDENTS

1. Notification and Selection:

Families are made aware of the Salt Lake Center for Science Education through the school website, Facebook, and informational meetings. Individual tours by the school principal or other staff member are available on request. SLCSE participates in the Salt Lake District Choice Catalog. Translations are available for all print material and online application information.

Applicants for the Salt Lake Center for Science Education must fill out an application form, available online or in hard copy. Applications are accepted from the 1st of December to the 15th of February. Applications may be sent electronically, via mail, or hand delivered. Within two weeks of receiving an application, the school notifies the applicant of receipt. Applications are not considered complete until such notice has been received. In the event that the school does not meet enrollment goals the period for accepting applications may be extended.

Students that are enrolled in SLCSE are automatically enrolled for subsequent years unless written notification is received by the school indicating their desire to withdraw.

All resident students of Utah qualify for admission.

- All eligible students who submit a timely application are admitted, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the specific grade level.
- If the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the specific grade level, then students are selected, by lottery, on a random basis except that the school gives preference to:
 1. siblings of students already admitted to or attending the school;
 2. a student of an SLCSE teacher or founder

2. Standards:

SLCSE will assemble a student handbook including clear behavioral expectations and consequences for acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Parents/families and students will be provided with this handbook and will be expected to sign a behavioral contract

agreeing to abide by these guidelines. The student handbook will also be posted on the school website. Generally our behavioral policy will be guided by the following ideals:

- Every student at Salt Lake Center for Science Education is expected to conduct themselves in a responsible, mature and respectful manner at school and at school sponsored activities.
- All students are expected to attend classes on time every day.
- All students are expected to comply with the Salt Lake Center for Science Education Dress Code at all times.
- All students are expected to follow directions of the faculty and staff in an appropriate manner.
- All students are expected to comply with the Salt Lake Center for Science Education Discipline Policy.
- All students are expected to respect one another and to refrain from using foul, profane, or vulgar language.
- All students are expected to put forth their maximum effort in classes in order to achieve academic excellence.

SLCSE has a school dress code policy for its students in accordance with state and federal law. SLCSE student conduct code conforms to Salt Lake City School District Student Discipline Policies (G-19; S-3; S-5). The purpose of policies G-19 (Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Prohibited) and S-3 (Student Discipline) and other related discipline policies is to foster a safe, positive environment for learning. Please refer to specific policies for detailed student discipline information.

3. School Discipline

Ultimately student discipline is conducted at the discretion of the Principal who may utilize any lawful and/or prudent means necessary to ensure a safe learning environment. If a student does not comply with the expectations outlined in the student handbook, SLCSE attempts to resolve the problem by employing any or all of the following steps:

- **Step 1 – Parent/Guardian Notification:** This may be written and/or verbal. This notification may be given by teachers, the Principal, or any other supervising adult. Notification may require parent signature and/or a conference with the referring adult.
- **Step 2 – Principal Intervention & Parent/Guardian Notification:** This will include a mandatory meeting with the Principal, the parent/guardian, the student and/or any other involved parties.
- **Step 3 – Suspension and/or Parent/Guardian Supervised Attendance:** The principal may suspend a student for up to 10 school days, with re-admission after a conference with the principal, parent/guardian, student, and others parties as determined by the principal within 10 school days. Suspensions of more than ten (10) consecutive days require that a student be afforded formal due process, which encompasses minimal due process, the opportunity for a district due process hearing, and provisions for a formal appeal.

- **Step 4 – Expulsion:** A student may be removed from a school for more than one year or permanently. Students who are expelled are not entitled to any educational services; alternative placement may be offered in some circumstances.

FACULTY AND STAFF

1. Screening and Selection:

SLCSE selects its personnel directly and in compliance with all federal and state rules and regulations. All teaching staff is evaluated on a yearly basis. Salt Lake District School Support Team is responsible for evaluating the performance of the Principal annually.

All Human Resource policies comply with the current policies of the Salt Lake City School District.

2. Qualifications:

All staff with teaching assignments in science, mathematics, language arts, social studies, or special education are highly qualified as defined by federal and state standards. SLCSE hires teachers in accordance with Utah State requirements for public school teachers. This includes certification and/or alternative certification as required by Utah law per Utah Charter School law 53A-1a-512.4. Ongoing employment at SLCSE is contingent upon meeting and maintaining these requirements. SLCSE may, as needed, hire part-time employees who are not certified. Such employees will meet minimum skill requirements for teaching at the school.

In addition, SLCSE seeks teachers with the following skills and experience:

- A demonstrated understanding of inquiry/ science process skills
- An interest in becoming teachers leaders in SLCS D for district-wide professional development within the context of science
- A demonstrated interest and ability to work with students of diverse backgrounds
- An interest in creating an environment where all students are challenged to achieve at their maximum potential
- Teaching and adapting instruction to various development levels
- A demonstrated commitment to learn and develop new curricula, as well as to propose improvements
- A demonstrated ability to treat colleagues, parents/families and students with respect
- A demonstrated willingness to collaborate with teachers, faculty and parents/families to creatively problems and make innovative decisions that will benefit the school
- Demonstrated ability to use technology effectively as a learning tool
- Comfortable with integrating scientists, volunteers, mentors, university and business partners

3. Staffing Patterns:

SLCSE will be composed of 420 students in grades 6 through 12, or 60 students per grade level. Secondary teachers are assigned based on licensure and endorsements.

When determining elective offerings teacher skill and interest is considered. Given the small size of the school full time teachers have multiple preparations. Sixth grade teachers specialize, with one teaching all of the mathematics and science while the other teaches the language arts and social studies.

SLCSE staff will participate in providing professional development for Salt Lake City School District teachers.

4. Teaching Schedule:

The schedule will be an 8-period day Monday through Thursday. Fridays will be 4-period days alternating between periods 1-4 and 5-8. Teachers will have two preparation periods. Some teachers will have reduced teaching schedules and assume various leadership roles in the school.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Purpose:

The Salt Lake Center for Science Education, a 6-12 lab school, is a partnership between Salt Lake City School District and University of Utah. This partnership creates a unique learning environment that enhances the experiences of students, teachers, pre-service teachers, educational researchers and scientists. SLCSE will strive to collaborate with the Salt Lake City School District Curriculum Department to provide district-wide science professional development.

The school purpose is to provide a diverse group of students with an alternative to traditional schools that promotes active engagement of learners, empowerment of teachers and staff, and connects with the greater community to create unique opportunities for learning. It is expected that all students attending SLCSE will be fully prepared for post-secondary education, that all teachers and staff will feel truly valued, and that the community of teachers, staff, families and students feel ownership in the school.

We value diversity and feel there are benefits to a heterogeneous mix of students that represent different cultures, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, and academic histories. The opportunity to broaden learning to include both academic and social learning is at its best in this environment. Students have the chance to understand different points of view based on the varied backgrounds of our student body. As we promote exploration of open-ended problems the variation of students' backgrounds comes into play in a very positive way since how we view the world often depends largely on the set of experiences to which we have been exposed during our development. All students have value and can contribute uniquely to the exploration. We make every effort to create an atmosphere that is truly integrated.

Learning is not a passive activity at SLCSE and it is expected that students must be actively engaged to maximize their learning. We have a strong focus on what students are actually be doing in any given lesson and what products they are to create. Teachers work

as facilitators of learning, often moving around active classrooms providing assistance to students as needed.

The school mission statement is: At SLCSE, we develop the character and skills necessary to "Change Reality." We are courageous and persistent problem-solvers. We take healthy risks. We make mistakes and learn from our mistakes. We care about the quality of our work. We use professional language and kindness to develop learning communities. We take care of our abundant resources and use them to serve our school community and beyond. We use our curiosity, imagination and adaptability to direct ourselves in our quest as learners, critical thinkers and ethical world citizens.

The notion of "changing reality" stems from an interaction between the school principal and the first 9th grade class at SLCSE. While visiting a language arts class to speak about the nature of 9th grade and the need to gain important skills and knowledge in high school, the principal mentioned how great it would be when the whole class graduated in four years. One of the students spoke up and said, "That is not realistic. There is no way we will all graduate. It is just reality." The principal's reply was, "Then we have to change reality." The phrase stuck and has become a mantra for the idea that just because things are one way at most schools, does not mean they have to be that way at SLCSE. Students have the capacity to change their lives through engagement in their education.

Our school wide expectations are focused on four areas: Be a Healthy Risk Taker, Develop Community Relationships, Show Respect, and Be Safe. We have been working with our students on what they look like in practice. As we encourage students to be healthy risk takers we ask them to embrace the opportunity to learn. We expect them to be willing to ask questions, both when there is something they do not understand and when there is something they wonder about. They need to develop the understanding that it is ok to make mistakes or to be wrong with an answer or approach to a problem, and that more often than not these situations create opportunities for learning. It takes courage to ask questions and share ideas with classmates and teachers.

We work to build community relationships. This has many benefits for students. At SLCSE we collaborate with students around the need to be kind to all, including people you do not know, help and encourage others, value other ideas, be a positive role model for others, and make sure everyone feels included.

SLCSE students show respect in their interactions with peers, teachers and staff. Beyond being polite we see students show respect for their learning by being on time and prepared for classes, helping to care for physical school environment, and having a positive attitude. We expect our students to graciously allow others to make mistakes. Students should work hard, participate and assure that they are actively engaged in their learning.

All students at SLCSE should feel safe. It is clear that students who feel safe at school are able to better focus on learning. We encourage and teach students how to take

responsibility to make sure no students are bullied. Students are taught to act, not ignore, when they see something happen that they know is not right.

Teachers are an integral part of the decision making process at SLCSE. They are encouraged to not only participate in the conversation but to feel empowered to bring new ideas to the table. Currently five teachers have extra periods built into their schedules to allow time to provide leadership within the school. The areas of focus have been the development of a writing lab, mathematics integration, staff development, science outreach, and general administrative assistance.

We always remain open to new connections outside the school if they have the potential to benefit students. We have piloted exhibits for the Leonardo Museum, taught a museum science class in partnership with the Natural History Museum of Utah, and piloted curriculum for the Genetics Science Learning Center. We have participated in providing mentors for Math for America students every year since opening. We have worked with many graduate students from a variety of departments at the University of Utah.

Community outreach includes work with both teachers and students from other schools. SLCSE offers a class to train eleventh and twelfth grade students to facilitate elementary science core curriculum focused lessons.

Professional development will take place on site utilizing partnerships between the school, science departments, the Urban Institute for Teacher Education or science outreach groups with a goal of developing science teachers who are dedicated, professional, and committed to student success through purposeful motivation and facilitation of student learning.

2. Curriculum:

Students meet all Salt Lake City School District and Utah State Core Curriculum requirements within a curriculum that places a special emphasis on engagement in open ended exploration, creating a culture of inquiry that permeates and utilizes all content areas in authentic ways, culminating in the development of integrated projects. In addition to state and district requirements all SLCSE students take a minimum of 4 years of science and 4 years of mathematics.

3. Calendar:

Salt Lake Center for Science Education follows the same academic calendar as other traditional calendar schools in Salt Lake City School District. The instructional calendar is submitted to the Salt Lake City School District for approval.

3. Extracurricular Activities:

SLCSE provides a variety of extracurricular activities. After school programming includes sports activities, homework hall, SLCSE Writing Lab, Bike shop, SLCSE College Access Lounge and a variety of activities that arise on occasion. For example, we currently have a dance class offered with the help of the dance department from the University of Utah. Students receive strong support for participation in science fair at the

school, district and regional levels. MESA participation has required the formation of both middle and high school clubs. SLCSE students participate in MathCounts, Spelling Bee, and Geography Bee. Field trips are commonplace and include schools, businesses, university campuses, Mesa Verde, Rio Mesa (U of U field camp), Great Salt Lake, Jordan River, Washington D.C. and a wide variety of locations in the Wasatch and Uintah mountains.

4. Waivers:

SLCSE is not requesting any waivers.

5. Replicating and Sustaining SLCSE:

With minimal marketing and recruitment applications for admittance have far outpaced the number of spaces available indicating a strong desire for this type of programming. Ongoing and expanding partnerships, particularly with the University of Utah, are further evidence of interest. SLCSE has included student teachers, pre-service placements, university teaching methods courses, Math for America placements every year since opening.

SLCSE could be expanded or replicated. Expansion would require another site to maintain the benefits of a small school. Though we feel STEM is an excellent context for learning and college preparation, it is development of a positive school culture that needs to be the primary focus of any expansion or replication.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

1. Instruments and Procedures;

All mandated district and state testing is facilitated through the Salt Lake City School District Department of Assessment and Evaluation.

All students will maintain online portfolios that will be accessible through the school web page. This on-line portfolio system will allow students to demonstrate their mastery of scientific processes and content acquisition. While traditional assessment methodologies are be utilized, parents/families will have access to this authentic assessment tool.

2. Reporting and Use:

The following is used to disseminate information regarding student performance to parents and students:

- Student performance/presentation
- Report cards, both mid-term and quarterly
- Parent teacher conferences
- Student teacher conferences
- Learning objectives set by teacher and student
- Student feedback

FINANCES AND REPORTING

1. Accounting Policies and Procedures:

SLCSE requests that the Salt Lake City School District provide all accounting services. SLCSE follows all of the financial policies (F1, F2, and F3) of the Salt Lake City School District.

All grants, gifts, donations, endowments, and bequests to the school in excess of \$500.00 are reported to the Salt Lake City School District business administrator and managed through the Salt Lake Education Foundation.

2. Insurance:

Insurance costs and all the other benefits for the employees are included in the overall expenditures.

3. Fees:

All students in grades 7 through 12 pay fees at registration. This revenue is used to fund various activities throughout the year. Fees and fee waivers associated with classes and/or an activity of SLCSE students is administered according to SLCS policies (S-10).

4. Responsibility:

For monies provided to SLCSE by the Salt Lake City School District, the responsibility for preparing financial and other reports will be borne by the District just as it is currently for a neighborhood school. The school's administration is responsible for submitting any financial information associated with grants, gifts, donations, endowments, and bequests, to the extent that information is not reported or otherwise available through the Salt Lake Education Foundation.

SUPPORT SERVICES

1. Transportation:

SLCSE owns a school bus that is used to provide transportation to and from school. A single route roughly around the perimeter of the Salt Lake City School District is run twice daily. The SLCSE bus is also used for field trips. All operating expenses are the responsibility of the Salt Lake Center for Science Education.

2. Food Services:

School lunch and breakfast are contracted through the Salt Lake City School District Child Nutrition Department.

3. Health and Safety:

SLCSE complies with all relevant health and safety codes. The school, through contract with the Salt Lake City School District (building owner) insures the building is clean and is well-maintained. A facilities audit is completed each year which reports any health/safety issues to the Auxiliary Services Department of the Salt Lake City School District.

4. Emergencies:

SLCSE uses the same emergency policies, procedures, and security plans as the Salt Lake City School District. An emergency plan is updated yearly and reviewed with all teachers and staff.

EVALUATION

1. School Improvement Plan:

Self-evaluation has become an integral part of SLCSE culture. Continuous collaboration among staff, partners, and parents assures that SLCSE remains flexible and adaptable. Each year the SLCSE sets goals and creates a School Improvement Plan to ensure the needs of students, parents, partners, and faculty are met. SLCSE values constructive feedback and encourages teachers, partners and parents to offer suggestions for improvements in school policy, procedure, curriculum and programs.

SLCSE is accredited by AdvancED (formerly Northwest Accreditation Commission) and has embraced the process of self-evaluation that is fundamental to success. The first full accreditation evaluation took place in the 2012-2013 school year. The term of accreditation is 5 years.

We believe school improvement is the only option and fully understand that it is a never ending process. We value input, whether positive or negative in nature, and use information as we plan our future.

2. Professional Development Plan:

SLCSE teachers and administration routinely participate in professional development based on individual needs. This may include PD offered through the Salt Lake City School District, Utah State Office of Education, or other providers.

We also approach professional development as a group. All teachers participate in PD related to school wide goals. For example, during the 2011-12 school year we determined a need to improve student writing. During the 2012-13 school year we have participated in ongoing professional development around writing. This has been facilitated by a teacher on staff at SLCSE and an expert from the Salt Lake Community College.

Over half of weekly faculty meetings are devoted to collaboration around school improvement. The small size of the staff allows for us to exist as a single collaborative learning community or to break up into teams for specific PD purposes.

3. Student Education Occupation Plan (SEOP):

Students participates the Student Education Occupation Plan (SEOP) process. With the help of counselor and parents, students create plans and set goals for their education. Guidance is provided to assist them in choosing age-appropriate and measurable goals. Students are encouraged to be creative and explore personal interests. Specific goals are set to ensure that all students are learning and meet established State standards.

Measurement of some of these goals is based on mastery of material and acceptable performance on established tests of skill and knowledge. SEOP's are reviewed annually or as needed to allow students and parents to assess progress and identify areas that need more attention. Students learn to assess their own progress and accept responsibility for their accomplishments.

4. Assessment of Student Achievement:

SLCSE participates in all assessments required by Utah code, USOE, and SLCSO. The administrator, faculty, and school community council review the results annually and make recommendations as needed to assure high levels of student performance.