



BOARD BRIEFS

Authored by the Davis School District Community Relations Department

Learning model helps increase student literacy Training for elementary, secondary teachers to begin in August

Davis School District plans on increasing student literacy at every grade level with Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS), a professional learning experience for educators.

Teaching and Learning Director Belinda Kuck told the Board of Education of the Davis School District that the two-year training opportunity will give teachers the tools to improve reading proficiency for all students.

“It is going to be the hallmark of this generation of teachers that will change the landscape for our students and their opportunities into the future,” said Kuck. “In this training, it really is rocket science teaching children how to read. We are excited because we can provide teachers with the tools to do that.”

The Utah State Board of Education is providing Davis School District with funding to train all kindergarten through third-grade teachers. Those teachers will be organ-

ized into cluster cohorts in August and receive training from USBE and national LETRS trainers. The district will then provide additional funding to train fourth through sixth-grade teachers.

Kuck said secondary school teachers are asking for the training too.

“We want to be able to provide that for all of our students who struggle to read, so in a targeted way, we are looking at our secondary schools based on a prioritized student need,” Kuck said.

Special education and READ 180 teachers in secondary schools will be placed in the training cohorts where there is availability, followed by English language arts chairs.

“I’ve had many teachers call in tears asking, ‘Can’t I get in sooner because my students need this,’” Kuck said. “I think it speaks to what we already know as the high cal-

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— Belinda Kuck,
Teaching & Learning Director

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District proposes updates to instructional materials evaluation

The district is updating its instructional materials evaluation process following the recent Utah State Board of Education ruling for professional learning standards involving diversity, equity and inclusion.

The ruling requires districts to refrain from providing professional development instruction for gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other protected class.

“We don’t currently have a practice of adopting content and materials that have those topics assigned to them,” said Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Logan Toone, “but we would like to make sure that we have lines in our policy that ensure that we would be compliant with the new state board rule and provide the appropriate consideration of what they just passed.”

Board member Julie Tanner asked if the new ruling affects pilot programs. Superintendent Reid Newey said the updated procedures will govern the content of materials and curriculum, which includes content of pilot programs.

Newey also explained that the ruling is still in the beginning stages as the state superintendent determines a

standard process for districts going forward.

Additional updates to the instructional materials evaluation process includes clarification of parental inclusion on instructional committees, increased frequency of digital material reviews and an updated appeal procedure.

The board will consider giving approval to the updated instructional materials policy during its next regular meeting on July 13, with the option to add in a addendum after the state superintendent’s office outlines its specifications.

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Board Member Gordon Eckersley asked about the teaching methodology behind the training. Kuck said LETRS is based on the science behind learning to read. Mississippi adopted the LETRS learning method five years ago, she said, when they were at the bottom of the nation in reading, and now they are leading the nation in student literacy.

“That speaks significantly to the work we want to do,” Kuck said. “There have been extensive studies on the brain and how we actually learn to read, debunking some of the myths of how we thought students learned to read. It’s not a language plus reading equals reading comprehension, it’s a multiplication problem. Language comprehension times reading equals reading. If any of those components is zero and the student doesn’t have those skills, the ability to read and read well is still a zero.”

Summer construction projects move forward at schools, administrative offices

Summer construction projects continue in the Davis School District with board approval of an office remodel at Meadowbrook Elementary. Wasatch West will complete the project for \$259,000.

In the district administration building, a renovation of the HVAC system will be completed. The Guar-

anteed Maximum Price for the project is \$2.9 million.

In other business, the board approved:

- The 2020-21 final budget.
- No one spoke at the public hearing.
- The district’s Special Education Policy Manual, which includes updated rules.
- The Comprehensive Title I

Program policy.

- Policy updates to the School Attendance and Truancy Intervention, which implements recent legislation.
- Minimal revisions to the Athlete & Student Concussion and Traumatic Head Injury policy.
- Revisions to the Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting policy.
- Updates to the School Community Council policy.

Board honors



The district’s Head Start/Early Head Start program was honored for its Best of State Award for early childhood programs.



Clearfield High student Sarah Frei was honored for her Best of State recognition as a K-12 student.



The district’s online school, Davis Connect, was honored for its Best of State recognition as an online school.



Central Davis Junior High band instructor Christine Wolf was honored for her recognition as the Best of State music educator.

Board honors, cont.



Central Davis Junior High student Lydia Garza is honored for her presentation at the Davis/Weber Regional History Day, the Utah State History Day competition, and now the National History Day competition later this month. This year's National History Day theme was Communication in History: the Key to Understanding. Lydia wanted to research a topic that was inspiring to people, so she chose to create "Ask Not, Communicating Through Speeches," an exhibit on John F. Kennedy and how he connected with others during his time through his speeches.



Northridge High student Mali Turner used her wish from the Make-A-Wish Foundation to help other students in need. She compiled hygiene kits for the new Students In Crisis Drop-In Center and purchased gifts to provide Christmas for at-risk junior high students in Davis School District. In addition, she donated two refrigerators to high school teen centers with additional funds she received from a school fundraiser. She received a Board of Education recognition for her service.



Jodi Lunt, director of the Davis Education Foundation, is honored for being given the 2021 Ruby Award by the Soroptimists of Bountiful. Each year, the award recognizes a woman of distinction who has worked to improve the lives of women, girls and children through their professional or volunteer work.



The Davis School District nurses were honored for their dedication to the staff and students during the past year. Extra duties they performed included participating in COVID-19 testing clinics and vaccination clinics, testing student athletes bi-weekly, testing for students to stay in school and testing for participation in extracurricular activities.