Board of Education Work Session

Monday, October 12, 2026 4:00 PM

South Summit School District
Achieving Excellence

A Board of Education Work Session of the Board of Education of South Summit School District will be held on Monday, October 12, 2026 beginning at 4:00 PM in the Boardroom, 285 East 400 South, Kamas, Utah 84036. All times listed are general in nature and are subject to change by the conducting Board Member.

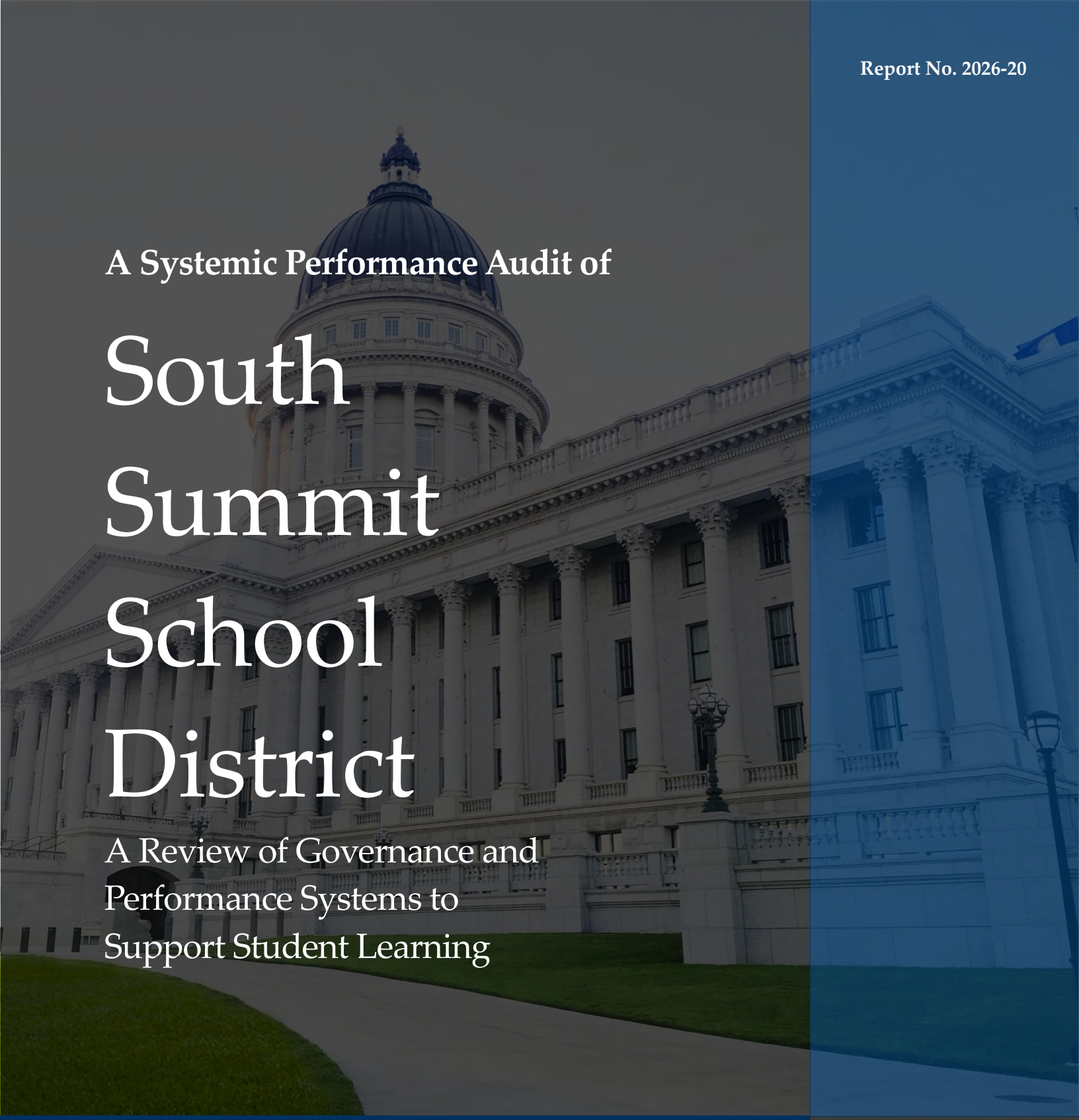
Electronic and telephonic participation may be available for Board Members. The Board Room at 285 E. 400 S. will be the anchor location for any electronic or telephonic participation.
The subjects to be discussed or considered, or upon which any formal action may be taken are as listed below. Items do not have to be taken in the order shown on this meeting notice. Unless removed from the consent calendar, items identified within the consent agenda will be acted on at one time.

The students, parents, employees and patrons of South Summit School District are both teachers and learners; we are responsible for supporting one another in reaching our highest potential as individuals, families and citizens.

I. **INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**
- A. Guests

II. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**
- A. OLAG (Office of the Legislative Auditor General) Auditors

Report No. 2026-20



A Systemic Performance Audit of

South Summit School District

A Review of Governance and Performance Systems to Support Student Learning

Office of the Legislative Auditor General

Report to the **UTAH LEGISLATURE**

LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR GENERAL


LEGISLATIVE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Audit Subcommittee

President J. Stuart Adams, Co-Chair
President of the Senate

Senator Kirk Cullimore
Senate Majority Leader

Senator Luz Escamilla
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Audit Subcommittee of the Legislative Management Committee

President J. Stuart Adams, Co-Chair | Speaker Mike Schultz, Co-Chair

Senator Kirk Cullimore | Representative Casey Snider

Senator Luz Escamilla | Representative Angela Romero

September 15, 2026

TO: THE UTAH STATE LEGISLATURE

Transmitted herewith is our report:

"A Systemic Performance Audit of South Summit School District" [Report #2026-20].

An audit summary is found at the front of the report. The scope and objectives of the audit are included in the audit summary. In addition, each chapter has a corresponding chapter summary found at its beginning.

Utah Code 36-12-15.3(2) requires the Office of the Legislative Auditor General to designate an audited entity's chief officer. Therefore, the designated chief officer for South Summit School District is Superintendent Greg Maughan. Superintendent Maughan has been notified that they must comply with the audit response and reporting requirements as outlined in this section of ***Utah Code***.

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

Sincerely,

Kade Minchey

Kade R. Minchey, CIA, CFE

Auditor General

kminchey@le.utah.gov

AUDIT

Independent, objective, evidence-based reviews that identify opportunities to strengthen performance, accountability, efficiency, and outcomes.

LEAD

A high standard for audit excellence: continuously improving our methods, embracing innovation, and applying the most effective tools and techniques available.

ACHIEVE

Every engagement approached with determination, professionalism, and a commitment to overcoming challenges in pursuit of meaningful improvements.

Audit. Lead. Achieve. ***These principles reflect both what we do and how we do it. We believe every organization can improve, and we can help. Our goal is to provide decision-makers with actionable information that supports continuous improvement, informed governance, and long-term success. To meet this goal, our findings must be objective, independent, and grounded in evidence. We design recommendations to be constructive, practical, and focused on helping organizations build upon their strengths. Our audits are designed to help policymakers better serve the people of Utah.***

LEA Audit Background

This audit of South Summit School District (SSSD) is the ninth LEA audit our office has completed. In an effort to provide Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with a resource that aggregates educational best practices, our office completed *The Best Practice Handbook For Student Achievement in Public Education* in 2025. This handbook outlines best practices for boards, districts, and schools to support student learning. Our office used this handbook in South Summit to measure the effectiveness of current practices and identify opportunities for improvement.

What South Summit School District Is Doing Well

SSSD requested this audit to identify areas for improvement at all levels within its organization. We appreciate the collaboration and openness of school and district staff, teachers, and administrators and their commitment to student learning. Over the past few years, SSSD has seen progress in both Acadience literacy and numeracy and currently leads its peers in student performance on the Acadience numeracy assessment.

How This Report Supports Improvement

While SSSD has made progress in both Acadience literacy and numeracy, it has had the lowest composite proficiency—students proficient on all three elements of RISE—out of its peer group over the past five years. Our office found that the board can improve its focus on using student data and strategic planning to monitor and address these issues. Additionally, we found the board can better utilize the superintendent evaluation process to provide feedback and accountability. At the district level, we found there is an opportunity to improve the teacher evaluation system. Currently, the system is not adequately identifying high-performing or low-performing teachers. We also recommend the Legislature prioritize an audit of teacher evaluations statewide. Lastly, we found that South Summit schools can better utilize student learning data to drive instruction, inform student interventions, and enhance their teacher collaboration meetings.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 South Summit School Board Can Better Prioritize Student Achievement and Set Clear Targets for District Performance 1

1.1 South Summit School Board Can Improve Student Performance Through Better Focus on Student Learning Data 2

1.2 South Summit School Board Can Provide Clearer Targets and Accountability for Student Academic Achievement in Its Strategic Plan 6

1.3 South Summit School Board Can Use More Effective Superintendent Evaluations to Improve Superintendent Accountability 9

Chapter 2 South Summit School District Should Leverage Its Evaluation System to Improve Teacher Efficacy 13

2.1 South Summit School District Can Develop Clearer Instructional and Evaluation Frameworks to Improve Student Performance 13

2.2 Principals Should Provide Greater Guidance to Teachers During Their Goal-Setting Process to Better Focus on Student Learning and Academic Achievement 18

2.3 The Legislature Should Consider an Audit to Identify Ways to Improve the Statewide Teacher Evaluation System 22

Chapter 3 South Summit Schools Should Improve Their Use of Student Data And Teacher Collaboration to Impact Student Learning 27

3.1 South Summit School District Can Better Use Data to Improve Student Learning 27

3.2 District and School Leadership Can Improve the Quality of Teacher Collaboration Meetings by Focusing On Student Learning 32

Complete List of Audit Recommendations 37

Appendices 41

A. Performance Data for South Summit School District 43

B. Rubric for Evaluating School Board Meetings 51

C. Collaborative Team Rubric 55

Agency Response Plan 61



OVERVIEW

South Summit School District (SSSD) is a small, rural school district located in Summit County. Below are key statistics about the district pulled from district software, USBE data, and the 2024-2025 annual report card for SSSD. Student academic performance is discussed in greater detail throughout the report.

1,516 STUDENTS

5 SCHOOLS
2 Elementary,
1 Middle, 1 High,
and 1 Secondary

91.75* TEACHERS
*A partial number indicates a part-time employee

82.4% CONSISTENT ATTENDANCE 2024-2025
High School

16% ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

86.7% CONSISTENT ATTENDANCE 2024-2025
Kindergarten-8th

9% MULTI-LANGUAGE LEARNERS

12% STUDENTS RECEIVING SPED SERVICES

SSSD's peers are Morgan School District, North Summit School District, Park City School District, and Wasatch School District. This means the five districts are similar enough in demographics for fair comparison. Below are additional key metrics on SSSD from the 2024-2025 school year. We include peer districts' data next to SSSD's data for comparison.

73.1%

AVERAGE K–3 ACADIENCE PROFICIENCY

78% Morgan
69.2% North Summit
76.8% Park City
57.2% Wasatch

45.5%

AVERAGE 3–8 RISE PROFICIENCY

56.7% Morgan
61.2% North Summit
65.8% Park City
58.9% Wasatch

73.2%

18+ COMPOSITE ACT SCORE

81.5% Morgan
68.8% North Summit
85.3% Park City
71.1% Wasatch

89.4%

GRADUATION RATE

97.1% Morgan
89.8% North Summit
95% Park City
93.1% Wasatch

2 of 7

LEGISLATIVE PERFORMANCE METRICS MET

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

SOUTH SUMMIT SCHOOL DISTRICT

KEY FINDINGS

- **1.1** South Summit School Board Can Improve Student Performance Through Better Focus on Data
- **1.3** The Board Should Use Effective Superintendent Evaluations to Improve Superintendent Accountability
- **2.1** South Summit School District Can Develop Clearer Instructional and Evaluation Frameworks to Drive Student Performance
- **3.1** South Summit School District Can Better Use Data to Improve Student Learning

RECOMMENDATIONS

- South Summit School Board should improve its oversight over student performance through regularly reviewing data during public meetings.
- South Summit School Board should formally adopt a superintendent evaluation system that includes clear success measures tied to the board's strategic plan and student learning.
- South Summit School District should refine its educator evaluation system to better identify top-performing teachers and elevate effective instructional practices.
- South Summit School District should work with principals to simplify its evaluation tools to focus on clear measures of student learning.
- South Summit School District should adopt best practices that allow for small-group and individualized interventions throughout all schools and grades.

AUDIT REQUEST

Utah Code allows our office to conduct performance audits of local education agencies (LEAs). This report represents the ninth LEA performance audit our office has completed. The superintendent of South Summit School District desired independent information and feedback to help the district better support student achievement and requested this audit to provide that information. District officials and staff worked collaboratively with our office throughout the audit.

BACKGROUND

Our office published the *Best Practice Handbook for Student Achievement in Public Education* in 2025. This handbook outlines the core actions that local boards of education (LBEs), LEA central offices, and school leaders should take to improve learning. We used the handbook to identify key areas for improvement in South Summit. Each level of the LEA (board, district, and school) has a chapter that outlines which of the 27 best practices they should focus on. We intend this as a framework for all future LEA audits.

REPORT SUMMARY

South Summit School Board Can Better Prioritize Student Achievement and Set Clear Targets for District Performance

We found that South Summit schools have not improved performance on the RISE exam for several years. To address this, the South Summit School Board should better prioritize discussions of student achievement and set clear targets for student performance in their strategic plan. Additionally, superintendent evaluations should be revised to better provide feedback and accountability.

South Summit School District Should Leverage Its Evaluation System to Improve Teacher Efficacy

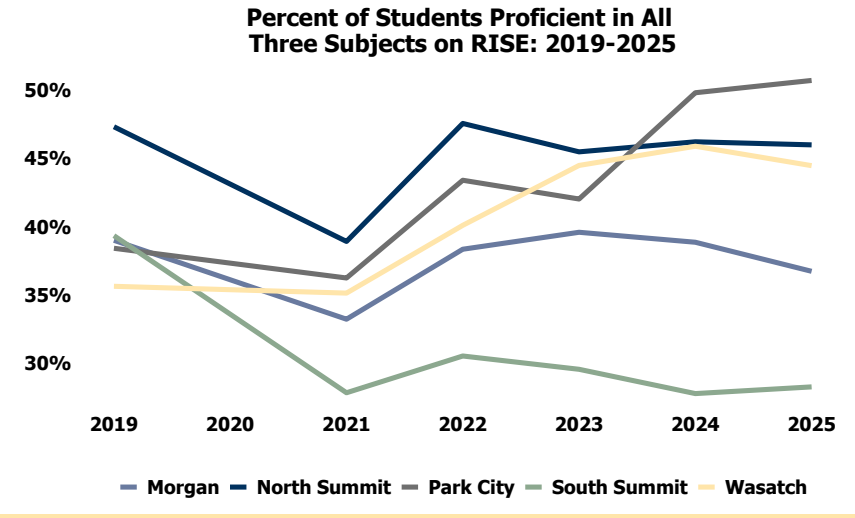
South Summit School District should provide greater clarity and support for principals and teachers through an effective evaluation system. We found that the current evaluation system is not adequately identifying high-performing or low-performing teachers. We also found potential obstacles in ***Utah Code*** that would need to be addressed at a statewide level to improve the teacher evaluation system.

South Summit Schools Should Improve Their Use of Student Data and Teacher Collaboration to Impact Student Learning

Student proficiency on the RISE exam has declined since 2019. To address this, schools should improve their use of student data and strengthen intervention systems. Additionally, teacher collaboration meetings should better focus on student achievement and adhere to best practices.

South Summit School District Could Improve Performance on the RISE Exam

Our office analyzed student performance data on the standards-based RISE exam and found that South Summit School District is performing below peer districts. We looked at composite proficiency—the percentage of students proficienct in all three subjects on RISE—and found that the district had the lowest overall proficiency among peers. Overall proficiency also did not increase from 2019 to 2025.



BACKGROUND

Our office's *Best Practice Handbook for Student Achievement in Public Education*, identifies nine principles of successful local boards of education (LBEs). This chapter focuses on three of those areas: robust strategic planning, reviewing student learning data, and superintendent evaluations.

FINDING 1.1
South Summit School Board Can Improve Student Performance Through Better Focus on Student Learning Data

RECOMMENDATION 1.1
South Summit School Board should improve its oversight over student performance by regularly reviewing data on student learning, academic achievement, and other key metrics outlined in the board's strategic plan during public meetings. Regular board discussion on student learning can improve accountability for student performance throughout the district and message that student learning is the board's top priority.

FINDING 1.2
South Summit School Board Can Provide Clearer Targets and Accountability for Student Academic Achievement in its Strategic Plan

RECOMMENDATION 1.2
South Summit School Board should work with the superintendent to develop a robust and complete strategic plan that includes all the necessary components listed within this chapter. This plan should include clear performance targets for student learning and provide guidance on how the district will improve student learning outcomes.

FINDING 1.3
South Summit School Board Can Use More Effective Superintendent Evaluations to Hold the Superintendent Accountable

RECOMMENDATION 1.3
South Summit School Board should formally adopt a superintendent evaluation system that includes clear success measures tied to the board's strategic plan and student learning. This evaluation should happen at least annually and ensure that the superintendent is given feedback on the areas where they need to improve to fulfill the board's vision.

CONCLUSION

We found that South Summit schools have not improved performance on the RISE exam for several years. To address this, the South Summit School Board should better prioritize discussions on student achievement and set clear targets for student performance in their strategic plan. Additionally, superintendent evaluations should be revised to better provide feedback and accountability.

Chapter 1
South Summit School Board Can Better Prioritize Student Achievement and Set Clear Targets for District Performance

Our office's *Best Practice Handbook for Student Achievement in Public Education* identifies nine principles of successful local boards of education (LBEs), as shown in the infographic.[1] This chapter focuses on three of those principles: robust strategic planning, review student learning data, and superintendent evaluations.

Best Practices for Local Boards of Education

- Stakeholder Engagement
- **Robust Strategic Planning**
- Strategically Aligned Budgets
- Clearly Defined Roles
- Strategically Aligned Governance
- **Review Student Learning Data**
- Regular and Rigorous Evaluations
- Board Handbooks and Policies
- **Superintendent Evaluations**

Our audit work identified that students in South Summit School District (SSSD, the district) have chronically underperformed on certain assessments. Section 1.1 summarizes student performance data and discusses how the South Summit School Board (SSSB, the board) could better focus on data during its meetings. Section 1.2 discusses how the board could provide more clarity through a comprehensive strategic plan. Finally, Section 1.3 outlines the importance of superintendent evaluations and discusses how the board could better leverage this important tool. By providing greater oversight and accountability in these areas, the board will be well positioned to improve student achievement.

SSSD demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement by voluntarily requesting this audit. We have presented the findings in each chapter with an appreciation for the district's willingness to identify and address areas for growth. We look forward to working with the board and district officials as they consider and implement improvements in the areas identified throughout this report.

[1] *The Best Practice Handbook for Student Achievement in Public Education* (Report No. 2025-13), 59.

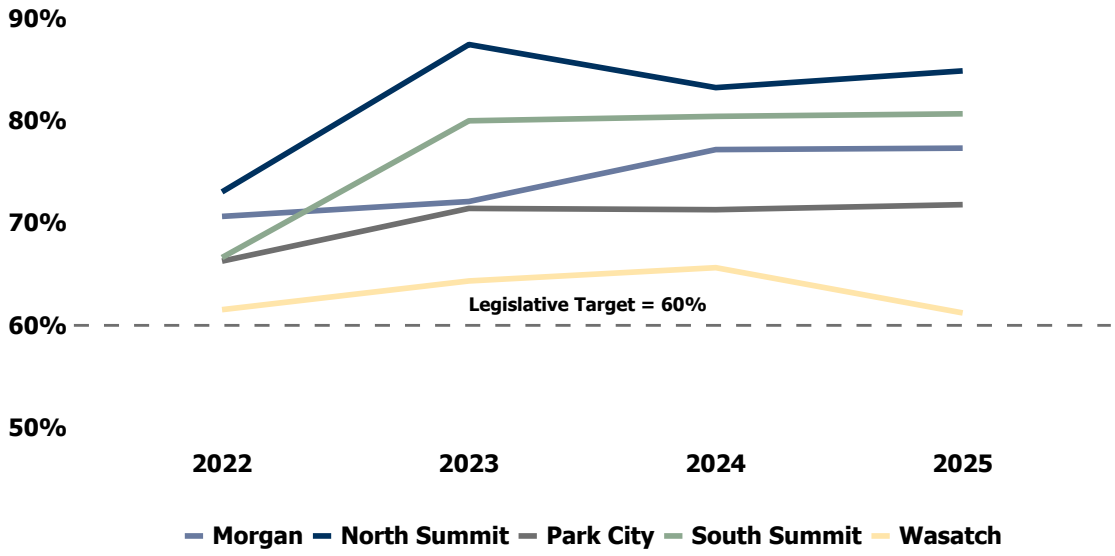
1.1 South Summit School Board Can Improve Student Performance Through Better Focus on Student Learning Data

Through our audit work, we found that SSSB can better prioritize discussions of student learning and academic achievement during its board meetings. We identified areas where student performance is chronically low when compared to peer districts and legislative targets. By making student learning a greater focus of board discussions, SSSB can set the tone that academic achievement is the board's top priority and provide greater accountability over the district's performance.

South Summit School District Can Improve Performance On Some Statewide Benchmarks When Compared to Peers

SSSD consistently performs below peer districts on the statewide RISE exam but has improved its performance on Acadience.[2] Figure 1.1 shows the percentage of students in SSSD and its peer districts making typical or better progress in the Acadience literacy and numeracy assessments from 2022-25.

Figure 1.1 The Percentage of Students Making Typical or Better Progress in Both Acadience Literacy and Numeracy Has Improved over Time. The district is only below one of its peers on measures of student progress on the Acadience literacy and numeracy exams.

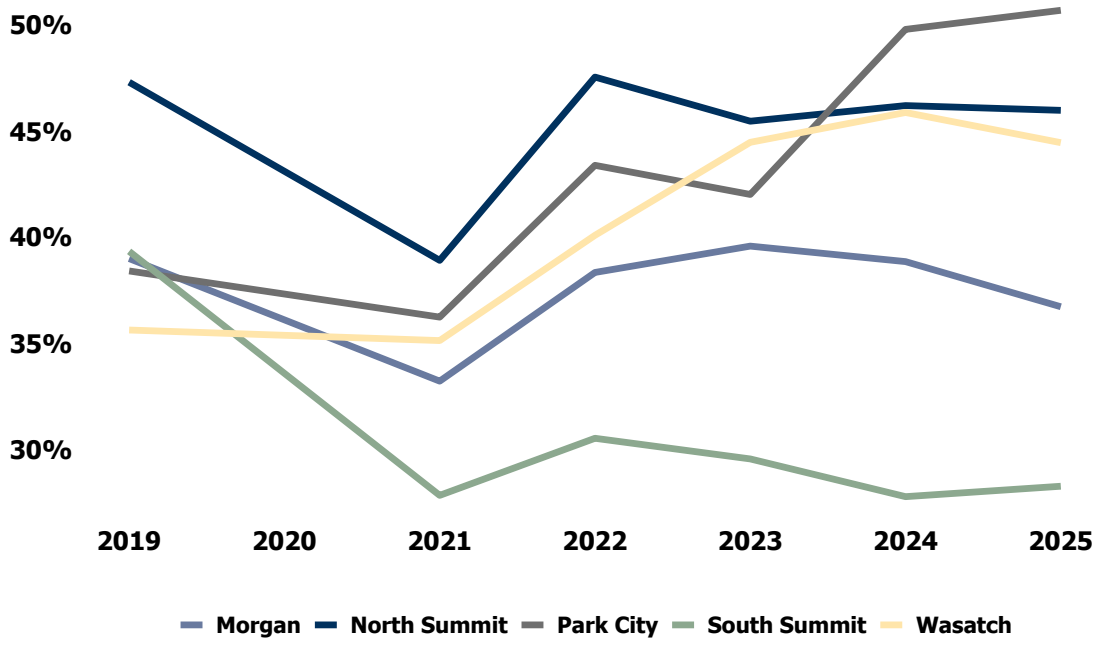


Source: Auditor generated.

[2] These statewide assessments, known as Acadience and RISE, serve different purposes and are taken in different grades. As noted in our office's recent literacy audit "Acadience is the primary assessment tool used to measure K-3 literacy progress," whereas RISE is a summative, end-of-year assessment used to evaluate student learning against grade-level standards for grades 3-10.

The district has not seen the same level of improvement in RISE. Figure 1.2 shows the percentage of South Summit students proficient in all three subjects on RISE (English language arts, mathematics, and science) compared to students in peer districts. Since 2020, South Summit students had the lowest composite proficiency (proficient in all three subjects) score each year when compared with their peers.

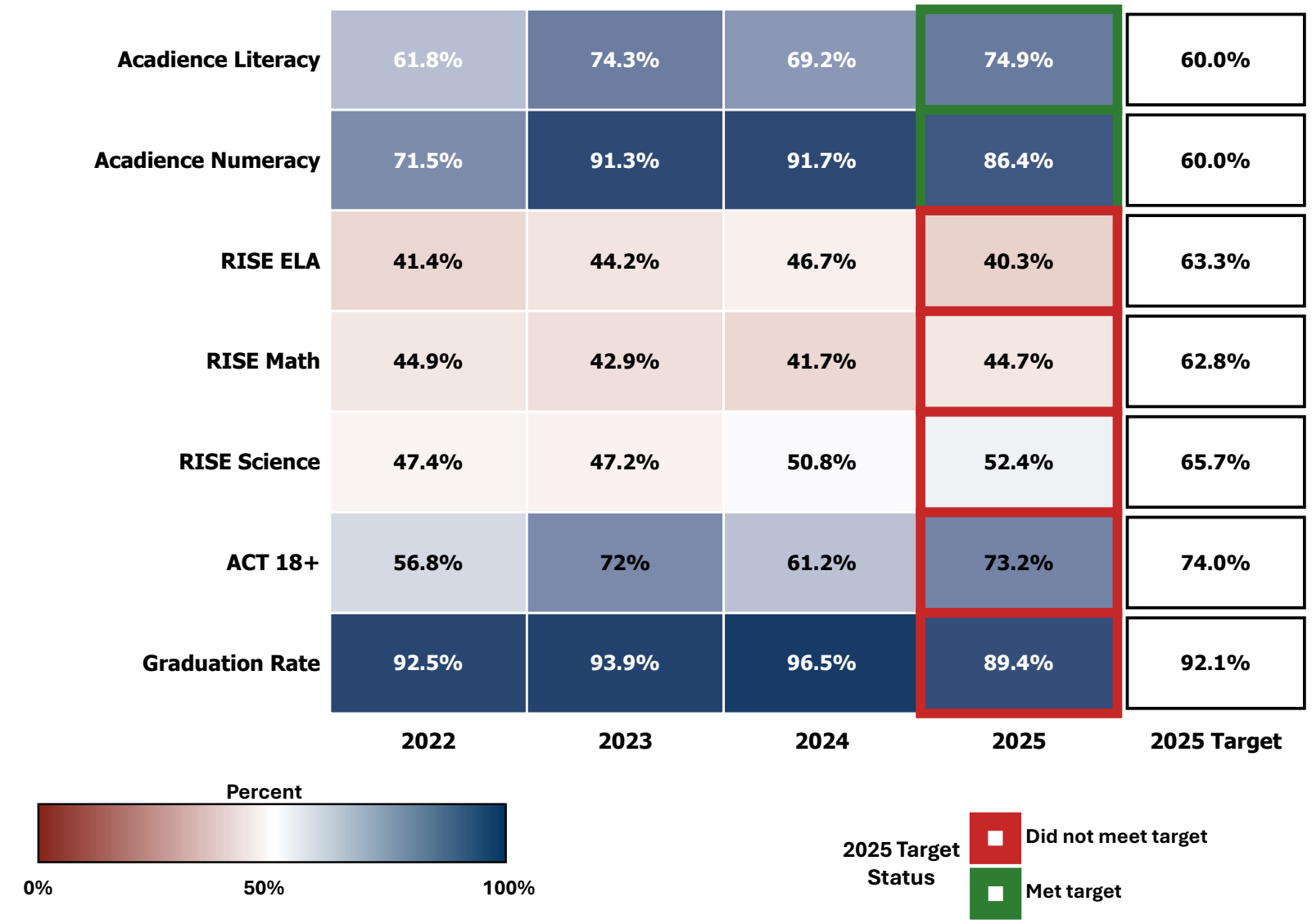
Figure 1.2 Since 2020, the Percentage of South Summit Students Proficient in All Elements of RISE Has Been the Lowest of Its Peers. Additionally, proficiency has essentially stayed the same over time.



Source: Auditor generated using data from the Utah State Board of Education (USBE).

To present a holistic view of the district's performance, we compiled Figure 1.3. It shows the district's performance on each component of Acadience and RISE, the percentage of students that received an 18 or above on the ACT, and the district's graduation rate—all from 2022 to 2025. We also include information on the district's performance relative to legislative performance targets in 2025. The district is only hitting two out of the seven targets we examined. Comparisons between South Summit and its peer districts for each element can be found in Appendix A. The district's chronic underperformance on RISE indicates an opportunity for the board to better prioritize student achievement. We explore this below.

Figure 1.3 South Summit Can Improve Its Performance on Key Legislative Targets. South Summit has seen growth in both Acadience literacy and numeracy, but performance in RISE has stagnated over time.



Source: Auditor generated using USBE data.

School Board Meetings Can Better Focus On Student Learning and Strategic Goals

Effective LBEs prioritize student learning and academic achievement and make learning a primary goal of their meetings. We found that SSSB has not consistently prioritized discussions of student learning and achievement in public board meetings. We believe a lack of focus on the board's primary mission—student academic achievement—has contributed to the district not improving its performance in certain areas. To address the chronic underperformance on RISE, SSSB should improve its oversight of student learning through regular discussion and focus on student performance throughout the district.

We found that the board is largely focused on administrative issues like construction, budgeting, and policies, while academic issues and student performance received less time.

To understand what occupies the most time during board meetings, our team performed two analyses on board meeting minutes and public board meetings. In the first analysis, we looked at how frequently academic issues were raised during board meetings. We found that the board is largely focused on administrative issues like construction, budgeting, and policies, while academic issues and student performance received less time.

In the second analysis, we listened to board meetings and analyzed them on a variety of metrics like who spoke the most, whether board members respected each other, and how often issues like student achievement came up in the meeting.[3] Based on our observations, the board administratively functions well: Meetings are conducted in a business-like manner, and board members listen attentively during presentations. However, the items that ranked lowest (meaning they were mentioned with the lowest frequency) all related to student learning and accountability. Taken together, these two analyses demonstrate that student learning is not a regular topic of discussion in board meetings.

Consistent with Best Practice 1.6: Review Student Data, we recommend that the board, in conjunction with the superintendent, improve its focus on student achievement by setting performance targets, regularly reviewing student performance data, and then aligning resources as needed to meet those targets. This practice should occur regularly in school board meetings to ensure a

[3] A copy of the rubric we used to evaluate school board meetings can be found in Appendix B.

consistent focus on performance and set the tone for the entire district that student achievement is the board's top priority.

RECOMMENDATION 1.1

South Summit School Board should improve its oversight over student performance by regularly reviewing data on student learning, academic achievement, and other key metrics outlined in the board's strategic plan during public meetings. Regular board discussion on student learning can improve accountability for student performance throughout the district and message that student learning is the board's top priority.

1.2 South Summit School Board Can Provide Clearer Targets and Accountability for Student Academic Achievement in Its Strategic Plan

SSSB can provide greater oversight and accountability for student learning through clearer goals and a comprehensive strategic plan. We found that the district's current strategic plan lacks clear targets for student learning, which we believe has led to a lack of accountability over student performance. An effective LBE provides clarity on the district's vision, mission, and goals through its strategic plan. They work with their superintendents to clarify what the district will achieve and how to achieve it, and they set clear goals for student learning—ultimately guiding the district to sustained improvement.

This is the heart of Best Practice 1.2: Robust Strategic Planning. To be effective, strategic plans should contain all the necessary elements to guide district improvement. The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget outlines eight elements of an effective strategic plan.[4] All these elements, as shown below, should be present within the plan to support the board's vision and ensure its vision is realized.

[4] *Best Practice Handbook: A Practical Guide to Excellence for Utah Government* (Report No. 2023-05), 20.



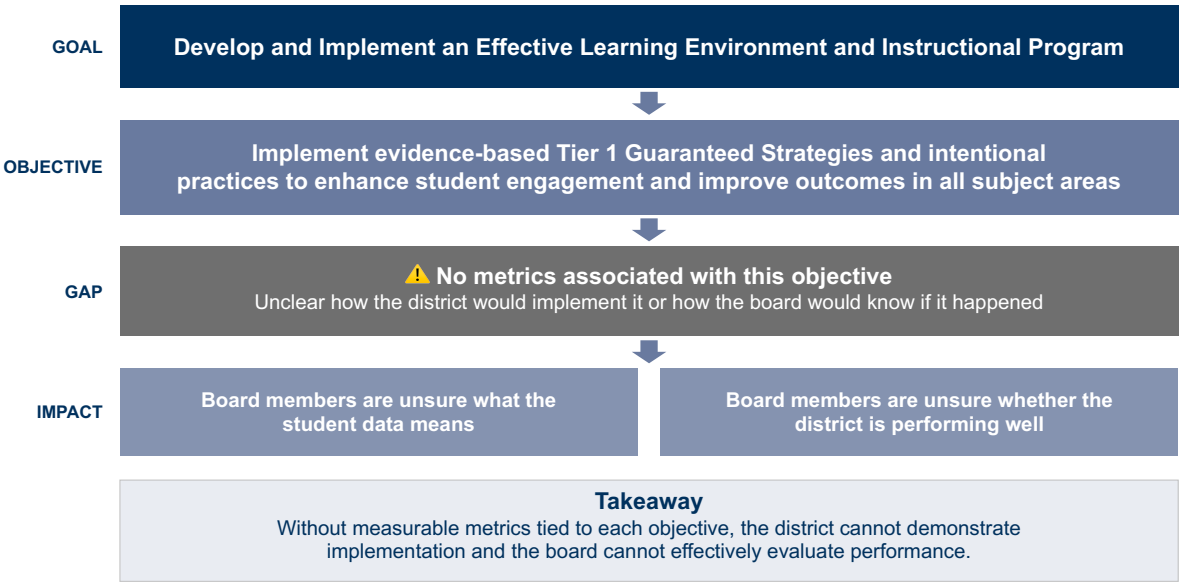
SOURCE: *Governor's Office of Planning and Budget*

We found a general lack of quantifiable objectives for student learning.

We reviewed the SSSD strategic plan against each of the eight elements and found that the plan only contained four of the eight necessary elements. We also found a general lack of quantifiable objectives for student learning; even the portion focused on student learning lacks clear targets. One of the strategic plan's goals is to "Develop and Implement an Effective Learning Environment and Instructional Program." One objective of that goal is to "Implement evidence-based Tier 1 Guaranteed Strategies and intentional practices to enhance student engagement and improve outcomes in all subject areas." There are not numerical outcome metrics associated with this objective, making it unclear how the district would implement it or how the board would determine if the objective had been met. We show this goal-metric disconnect in the following chart:

The Goal-Metric Disconnect

How missing metrics break the line of sight between objectives and board oversight



In contrast, our *Best Practice Handbook for Student Achievement in Public Education* identified the Park City School District (PCSD) strategic plan as a positive example.[5] It contains clear goals and metrics for determining if those goals are met, the plan's first strategic goal is centered on student learning, and the plan contains a description of how the strategic goals will be funded. For example, the plan states that PCSD will use its software system to track student data and a midyear report helps monitor the district's progress. The Park City School District audit found that the use of this software "may have facilitated a more efficient use of resources and more effective implementation of programs in the district."[6]

We recognize that SSSD is currently working on a new strategic plan and appreciate the desire to improve. The feedback in this chapter can help guide those revision efforts. Therefore, moving forward, we recommend that SSSB, as part of its new strategic planning process, include clear, quantifiable performance targets for student learning. Then, as the board regularly reviews student learning data in public board meetings, they will have the ability to determine whether the district is moving toward its goals or whether adjustments need to be made.

[5] *The Best Practice Handbook for Student Achievement in Public Education* (Report No. 2025-13), 10.

[6] *A Systemic Performance Audit of Park City School District* (Report No. 2023-11), 57.

RECOMMENDATION 1.2

South Summit School Board should work with the superintendent to develop a robust and complete strategic plan that includes all the necessary components listed within this chapter. This plan should include clear performance targets for student learning and provide guidance on how the district will improve student learning outcomes.

1.3 South Summit School Board Can Use More Effective Superintendent Evaluations to Improve Superintendent Accountability

Effective school boards leverage superintendent evaluations to guide district improvement and hold the superintendent accountable for student learning. We found that SSSB has not conducted a formal evaluation of the superintendent since 2024. When reviews have happened, they did not provide useful feedback. An absence of consistent feedback and accountability may have contributed to the district's lack of improvement in RISE. Through adopting a more rigorous and effective evaluation system focused on student learning, the board can ensure its strategic priorities are being accomplished.

The relationship between a school board and its superintendent is critical for the long-term success of the district. The National School Boards Association states that the most significant role of a school board may be in providing oversight of the district superintendent. One method of accomplishing this is through superintendent evaluations. Effective superintendent evaluations provide clarity on whether the superintendent is fulfilling the board's vision for student achievement. Boards should use this tool to set expectations for the superintendent and hold superintendents accountable when board expectations are not being met. The National School Boards Association states the following:

National School Boards Association

"Effective evaluation can help lead district improvement. An accurate, fair, and objective evaluation of a school district superintendent may be one of the most significant levers a school board has for driving district improvement. However, research on superintendent evaluation suggests current practice typically lacks a clear process with objective measures."

We believe SSSB can improve its superintendent evaluation to provide greater clarity to and accountability for the superintendent. An evaluation of the

superintendent has not occurred since 2024. The form the board last used for evaluations was the Utah School Boards Association (USBA) template, not a form specifically designed for SSSD. Best Practice 1.9: Superintendent Evaluations encourages boards to adopt a formal evaluation system tied to their strategic plan. In our *Best Practice Handbook for Student Achievement in Public Education*, we point to the Massachusetts model for superintendent evaluations.[7] This framework establishes clear goals for the superintendent and sets a cadence of evaluation and feedback throughout the year to ensure those goals are being met.

Without an effective, regular evaluation process, the board has not utilized one of its most significant levers for change and accountability for the superintendent's performance. We recommend that the board formally adopt an evaluation system that includes clear measures of success tied to the board's strategic plan and student learning. This evaluation should happen at least annually and focus on providing the superintendent with feedback on the areas of improvement needed to carry out the board's vision for student learning and academic achievement.

RECOMMENDATION 1.3

South Summit School Board should formally adopt a superintendent evaluation system that includes clear success measures tied to the board's strategic plan and student learning. This evaluation should happen at least annually and ensure that the superintendent is given feedback on the areas where they need to improve to fulfill the board's vision.

[7] *The Best Practice Handbook for Student Achievement in Public Education* (Report No. 2025-13), 20.

BACKGROUND

Our *Best Practice Handbook for Student Achievement in Public Education* outlines eight best practices for LEA central offices. Our audit work identified areas in which the district is doing well. This chapter identifies one area where we believe the district office can improve: Clear Instructional and Evaluation Frameworks.

FINDING 2.1
South Summit School District Can Develop Clearer Instructional and Evaluation Frameworks to Improve Student Performance

RECOMMENDATION 2.1
South Summit School District should refine its educator evaluation system to better identify top-performing teachers and elevate effective instructional practices to improve student learning outcomes. The system should also better identify teachers who need remediation and provide the needed support.

RECOMMENDATION 2.2
South Summit School District should work with principals to improve the quality of classroom instruction by simplifying its evaluation tools to focus on clear, quantifiable measures of student learning. The new evaluation system should provide more effective feedback to teachers and help principals and teachers understand the quality of instruction based on student learning data.

FINDING 2.2
Principals Should Provide Greater Guidance to Teachers During Their Goal-Setting Process to Better Focus on Student Learning and Academic Achievement

RECOMMENDATION 2.3
South Summit School District principals should evaluate teacher goals to ensure they are connected to student achievement, address instructional deficiencies, and verify that the goal is measurable. Once set, principals should support and hold teachers accountable as they seek to reach their goals to improve student learning.

FINDING 2.3
The Legislature Should Consider an Audit to Identify Ways to Improve the Statewide Teacher Evaluation System

RECOMMENDATION 2.4
The Legislature should consider an audit on teacher evaluation systems focused on the role of student data in evaluations, whether potential limitations exist within ***Utah Code*** and/or *Administrative Rule*, and an overall assessment on how the evaluation system could be improved to drive teacher and student performance.

CONCLUSION

South Summit District should provide greater clarity and support for principals and teachers through an effective evaluation system. We found that the current evaluation system is not adequately identifying high-performing or low-performing teachers. We also found potential obstacles in ***Utah Code*** that would need to be addressed at a statewide level to improve the teacher evaluation system.

Chapter 2
South Summit School District Should Leverage Its Evaluation System to Improve Teacher Efficacy

Our *Best Practice Handbook for Student Achievement in Public Education* outlines eight best practices for the central office of a local education agency (LEA). Our audit work identified areas in which South Summit School District (SSSD, the district) is doing well. This chapter identifies one area where we believe the district office can improve: Clear Instructional and Evaluation Frameworks.

Best Practices For LEA Central Offices

- Strategic Staff Placement
- Instructional Coaching Expectations
- Remove Department Silos
- Principal Pipeline
- Robust Principal Supports
- Principal Accountability
- Curriculum Adoption Policies
- **Clear Instructional & Evaluation Frameworks**

Section 2.1 examines how the district office can develop a clearer evaluation framework[8] to improve the quality of classroom instruction. Section 2.2 shows that teacher goals should be more focused on student achievement. Lastly, Section 2.3 suggests that the current statewide teacher evaluation framework could benefit from additional audit work.

2.1 South Summit School District Can Develop Clearer Instructional and Evaluation Frameworks to Improve Student Performance

SSSD has performed below peer districts on the RISE exam for the past five years. Chronic underperformance on the RISE exam indicates a need for improved classroom instruction and shows that the district's evaluation system is not adequately identifying and remedying deficiencies in classroom instruction. We believe that one reason for this is that SSSD's current evaluation framework is cumbersome and not adequately tied to student performance measures.

[8] A teacher evaluation framework is a structured set of guidelines for teacher performance that administrators use to evaluate teachers. The framework includes both formative (throughout the year) and summative (annual) evaluations, each of which are explored in greater depth below.

Audit Tests Show Evaluations Do Not Differentiate Between Levels of Teacher Performance

Utah Code states that the purpose of teacher evaluations is to provide "specific feedback and support for improvement through a systematic, fair, and competent evaluation and remediation of public educators whose performance is inadequate."[9] To evaluate how effectively SSSD's teacher evaluation system identifies high-and low-performing teachers, we performed a statistical analysis to determine whether teacher summative evaluation scores were correlated with their students' performance on the RISE assessment.[10]

We found no significant correlation between measures of student proficiency and evaluation scores on RISE.

We found no significant correlation between measures of student proficiency and evaluation scores on RISE. We also found instances where teachers with consistently low growth scores on the RISE exam either did not have an evaluation logged or received high evaluation scores. These results suggest that the evaluation system may not effectively distinguish between effective teachers and teachers who require additional support.

Through working with principals, we identified three primary issues contributing to the disconnect between student academic performance and teacher evaluation scores:

- The number of criteria centered on student performance in the district's summative evaluation rubric is lower than the number of nonacademic criteria.
- The evaluation framework from the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) does not allow for stratification in teacher performance.
- The current teacher evaluation management system the district uses, ObserverTab, is cumbersome and time consuming.

Each of these issues is explored below.

[9] ***Utah Code*** 53G-11-501.5.

[10] Correlation is a statistical measure that looks at the strength of a relationship between two or more variables. In this instance, we wanted to see a high, positive correlation, meaning that the two are closely related.

Issue 1: Student Performance Criteria Needs to Better Reflect Quantifiable Measures of Learning

Two of the tools that SSSD currently uses for classroom observation are the GSIP (Guaranteed Strategies and Intentional Practices) Classroom Observation and the SSSD Effective Instruction Rubric. Both the annual assessment data and our own analyses indicate that these tools do not include specified, quantifiable measures of student learning. Although the summative rubric (the SSSD Effective Instruction Rubric) includes observable behaviors that are designed to evaluate student learning, a principal reported—and others agreed—that the number of elements centered on nonacademic performance measures in the summative evaluation rubric is higher than the number of criteria that reflect student performance.



Data measuring the impact of a teacher's instructional effectiveness on student's academic performance should also be included to provide a more complete view.

Pedagogy (how a teacher teaches) is important. However, pedagogical measures in isolation do not provide a complete picture. Data measuring the impact of a teacher's instructional effectiveness on students' academic performance should also be included to provide a more complete view. For this reason, the district and principals should review their evaluation tools to ensure that student performance is given proper weight and include clear, quantifiable measures of student learning, not just student behaviors.

To better understand teacher perceptions of the teacher evaluation framework, our team interviewed 21 teachers across SSSD, with teachers represented in the elementary, middle, and high schools. We found their feedback regarding the evaluation process varied widely. Some feel they are given specific, actionable feedback by their administrator and that the process meaningfully improves their teaching. Others feel that the evaluations are perfunctory and do not lead to meaningful feedback that can improve instruction. Using student performance data in the teacher evaluation tools will lead to more meaningful feedback.

Utah Code currently prohibits the use of end-of-level assessment scores in teacher evaluations.[11] We believe this prohibition has limited the ability of LEAs to measure teacher performance, and we address this in greater detail in Section 2.3 of the chapter.

Absent end-of-level assessment data, there are numerous other sources of student data that *can* be used. For example, ***Utah Code*** explicitly requires that

[11] ***Utah Code*** 53G-11-507(2)(b).

student academic growth data be included in a teacher's evaluation.[12] South Summit has a data platform (Performance Matters Reports) that has data on student performance throughout the year. This data could be used to identify both effective and ineffective instructional practices among teachers and measure student understanding of particular standards. The district, administrators, and teachers should better utilize this data to identify effective and ineffective instructional practices and measure student learning as part of its evaluation process.

Issue 2: Deficiencies Exist in the USBE Evaluation Criteria

As noted previously, statute and USBE rule set the general framework for teacher evaluations. One principal noted that the current evaluation criteria established by USBE only allows teachers to receive a score of 1,2, or 3 on a given piece of criteria, making it difficult to meaningfully identify and stratify teacher performance. This is discussed further in Section 2.3 of this chapter.

Issue 3: The District's Observation Tools Can Be Significantly Simplified

SSSD's observation policy states that teachers should receive "at least two walk-through evaluations" per year, provisional educators should receive a summative evaluation at least twice a year, and career educators should "receive at least one Formative Evaluation and one Summative Evaluation annually." We reviewed the number of evaluations reported in ObserverTab for the past three years and found that, based on the data presented, two schools had only logged 10 or fewer observations over a three-year period.

However, conversations and documentation provided by principals showed that formative observations are occurring but are not recorded in ObserverTab. Principals explained that ObserverTab is cumbersome and not user-friendly, resulting in them developing their own tools and strategies for formative observations. Additionally, as noted in Issue 1, the district has several different evaluation rubrics, which the principals believe creates unnecessary complexity and adds to the administrative burden. We agree.

[12] ***Utah Code*** 53G-11-507(1)(b)(viii).

We conducted classroom observations alongside principals and, after the observations were finished, spent over an hour discussing multiple forms to complete a single evaluation. There is an opportunity to simplify and streamline the evaluation tools and invest in a more user-friendly management system, thereby allowing administrators to spend more time in the classroom than on administrative tasks associated with evaluations. The district office and principals should collaborate to implement these changes. Regular observation and feedback can help teachers identify weaknesses early, improve instruction, and make the observation cycle more meaningful.

There is an opportunity to simplify and streamline the evaluation tools and invest in a more user-friendly management system.

Houston Independent School District (Houston ISD) provides an example of how this can be done. To provide ongoing feedback, principals are expected to conduct multiple observations every week and log them in a centralized system. Houston ISD's New Education System model places strong emphasis on instructional leaders being present in classrooms, providing ongoing coaching in the moment, and giving immediate feedback to teachers to improve instructional quality. The district's focus on ensuring principals serve as the instructional leader for the school is reflected in its handbook:

Houston Independent School District – NES Playbook

"The main role of administrators is to serve as instructional [leaders], contributing to overall staff development and student success.…Administration should generally be in classrooms and learning spaces 80% of the time their students are in class."

RECOMMENDATION 2.1

South Summit School District should refine its educator evaluation system to better identify top-performing teachers and elevate effective instructional practices to improve student learning outcomes. The system should also better identify teachers who need remediation and provide the needed support.

RECOMMENDATION 2.2

South Summit School District should work with principals to improve the quality of classroom instruction by simplifying its evaluation tools to focus on clear, quantifiable measures of student learning. The new evaluation system should provide more effective feedback to teachers and help principals and teachers understand the quality of instruction based on student learning data.

2.2 Principals Should Provide Greater Guidance to Teachers During Their Goal-Setting Process to Better Focus on Student Learning and Academic Achievement

Another component of the teacher evaluation system is goal setting. The Legislature recognizes that "the high quality of teachers is absolutely essential to enhance student achievement."[13] Through annual goal setting, teachers can improve their effectiveness by identifying gaps in instructional practice and student learning and creating a plan to address those deficiencies. As part of the goal-setting process, teachers are required to develop goals aligned with student learning and engage in "reflection for professional growth."[14] This aligns with the requirement in ***Utah Code*** that student academic growth data be included as part of a teacher's evaluation.[15] Principals should act as instructional leaders and help their teachers set meaningful goals to improve student learning.

Of the 60 teacher goals evaluated, 18 had unclear success metrics, meaning the proposed success measure made it difficult to identify whether the goal was reached or whether it had a positive impact on student academic performance.

During the interviews conducted with teachers, we asked them their opinions on the teacher goal-setting process and received a range of opinions. One teacher described the goal setting process as "going through the hoops" and stated there is no follow-up or reward for reaching the goal. Another teacher felt the process was not as useful as it could be.

Our office randomly selected 60 goals set by SSSD teachers to evaluate how effectively teacher goals are tied to student achievement and get a general sense of the quality of the goals throughout the district.

[13] ***Utah Code*** 53E-6-103(2)(a)(ii).

[14] Utah State Board of Education, "Utah Model Teacher Evaluation System Overview". https://schools.utah.gov/curr/educatordevelopment/administratorfiles/evaluation_document_files/Utah%20Model%20Teacher%20Evaluation%20System%20%20Overview%20ADA.pdf.

[15] ***Utah Code*** 53G-11-507(1)(b)(viii).

Although many teachers have goals clearly tied to student achievement that are targeted, measurable, and timely, a significant number of teacher goals lacked clear metrics to evaluate success. Of the 60 teacher goals evaluated, 18 had unclear success metrics, meaning the proposed success measure made it difficult to identify whether the goal was reached or whether it had a positive impact on student academic performance.

Teacher Goals Can Include More Meaningful Progress Measures

Here are two examples of goals we feel could be better tied to student achievement and include more meaningful progress measures, as well as two positive examples:

Ineffective Goal 1: A Generalized Learning Objective with No Clear Success Measure. One teacher set a goal that "90% of [their] class" would "write a complete sentence using correct spelling and grammar." However, there is no mention of how this will translate into student progress or what the rubric is that will be used to evaluate and track how students are progressing to this goal.

Ineffective Goal 2: Broad Success Measures with Unclear Ties to Student Learning. Another teacher set a goal for students to demonstrate "how energy causes changes in matter by designing and conducting experiments…" The assessment measures included discussions, worksheets, experiments, formal assessments, and Performance Matters. These performance measures are not specific enough, and it is unclear how they tie to the stated goal.

In contrast, here are a few examples of effective teacher goals that we believe provide a model that should be adopted across SSSD:

Effective Goal Example 1: Identifying a Consistent Learning Weakness and Developing a Department-Wide Evaluation Metric. One teacher noted that after reviewing data from Aspire, they found a particular learning standard that students consistently underperformed in across all grades. To address the learning gap, the teacher proposed the following change to their instruction:

Instructional Change

"[Have students] [a]nalyze two or more works of fiction with similar themes or topics, drawing on patterns of events, characters (sic) types, and stylistic choices. (RL) Analyze how two or more texts about the same topic shape their presentations by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts; identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation."

The teacher also noted that this would be a focus across the department. To measure success, the teacher proposed the following evaluation metric:

Evaluation Metric

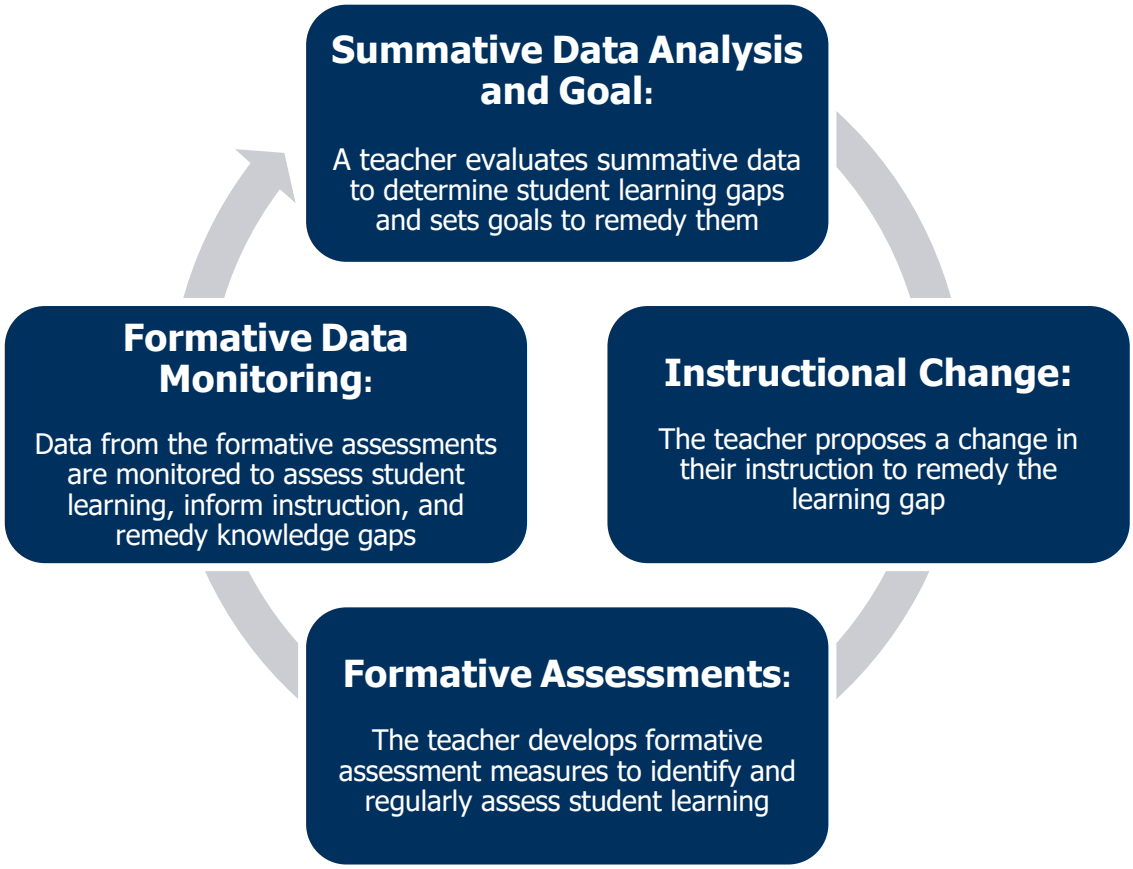
"My meaningful goal is to have 80% of my students score a proficient score on an Aspire-like question where they identify themes between two pieces of literature in an Aspire-like question by the end of the year."

Effective Goal Example 2: A Gap in Student Understanding Led to Changes in the Formative Assessment. Another teacher, after identifying a gap in student learning, set a goal for "50% [of] Science students to become proficient in the 5.3 strand of Science."

The teacher then described how they would use a formative assessment in Performance Matters to test student understanding before and after the unit to ensure students are understanding and can demonstrate mastery of the material.

Notice that in both examples the goals are informed by data: The teachers identified a gap in student understanding based on summative assessment data and set a goal to remedy it. Both teachers proposed changes in their instruction to remedy the student learning gap. Additionally, formative assessments and data would be used to measure student understanding of key concepts. The first goal is also horizontally aligned: The entirety of the department is going to be working on the same goal. Lastly, both goals are time-bound and measurable.

These same principles should guide teachers generally when preparing their goals annually and are reflected in this infographic:



Principals should ensure that teachers are using both formative and summative data when setting goals that address deficiencies in student learning outcomes. They should also discuss the metrics teachers are using to evaluate student progress with their teachers to ensure that they are easily trackable and accessible. If it is impossible for a teacher to evaluate progress toward their goal throughout the year, or if the goal is not tied to student achievement, it should be reevaluated.

RECOMMENDATION 2.3

South Summit School District principals should evaluate teacher goals to ensure they connect to student achievement, address instructional deficiencies, and can be measured. Once set, principals should support teachers and hold them accountable as they seek to reach their goals to improve student learning.

2.3 The Legislature Should Consider an Audit to Identify Ways to Improve the Statewide Teacher Evaluation System

This chapter lists several ways that SSSD can improve its evaluation system—as outlined in Best Practice 2.8: Clear Instructional and Evaluation Frameworks—but we believe some of the problems in SSSD are indicative of opportunities to improve the evaluation system statewide. Our team evaluated the current statute and administrative rule governing teacher evaluations and found they are ambiguous and limit opportunities to differentiate between effective and ineffective teaching. The statewide evaluation standards are also unclear regarding how student data can be used in evaluations. We believe there are opportunities to improve the evaluation system to better reflect student learning.

Statute Limits How Districts Can Use Data And Differentiate Teacher Performance

Utah Code and *Administrative Rule* outline the basic requirements for each district's evaluation system. District evaluation systems must include multiple lines of evidence, which statute defines as the following:[16]

- Self-evaluation
- Student and parent input
- For an administrator, employee input
- A reasonable number of supervisor observations to ensure adequate reliability
- Evidence of professional growth and other indicators of instructional improvement based on educator professional standards established by the state board
- Student academic growth data

Our team found that statute and rule could provide clearer guidance on how student data is to be used in evaluations. Although ***Utah Code*** requires the use of student academic growth data in teacher evaluations, it prohibits the use of end-of-level assessment scores. Neither student academic growth data nor end-of-level assessment is defined in statute, making it difficult for districts to understand what data is acceptable to use and what is not.

[16] ***Utah Code*** 53G-11-507(1)(b).

Administrative Rule provides a definition for "academic growth," but other definitions make it appear this has more to do with teacher behavior than student performance. Academic growth is defined as:

> *"…demonstration of student learning through* ***formative assessment measures*** *identified by the LEA, school, or educator within the school year"* (emphasis added).[17]

Formative assessment measures are defined as:

> *"…planned, ongoing processes used for educators to engage in reflection and growth of professional skills and includes opportunities to receive feedback on strengths or weaknesses of specific knowledge, skills, or abilities."*

In other words, the formative assessments that are supposed to be evaluating student academic growth are evaluating the management of teachers' professional growth. Past audit work identified that schools have sometimes evaluated teachers more on their management of growth goals rather than whether students achieve those goals.[19]

Use of end-of-level assessment data in evaluating teachers in core subjects (math, English language arts, and science) was allowed in statute prior to 2016, at which point the current prohibition was added. However, this practice seems to be changing. During the 2026 General Legislative Session, Senate Bill 241 amended the statute to include a requirement that "student performance and academic progress on the benchmark reading assessment (Acadience)" also be included as a measure of student academic growth in kindergarten through third grade. Thus, there appear to be conflicts in statute regarding how data is to be used in teacher evaluations. It is also unclear what data can be used to evaluate how teachers in non-tested subjects are performing.

We recognize that there are factors outside of a teacher's control when it comes to student learning, so using student performance data in isolation in evaluations can be problematic. However, as has been demonstrated in the analyses discussed above, pedagogical measures in isolation are also incomplete. For these reasons, we believe evaluation systems warrant additional study.

As noted above, *Administrative Rule* also creates restrictions on the evaluation scores, by only allowing for a teacher to receive a score of 1, 2, or 3.[20] A sample of

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[17] *Administrative Rule* R277-323-2(1).

[18] *Administrative Rule* R277-323-2(8).

[19] *A Performance Audit of Teacher and Principal Performance* (Report 2022-03), 20.

[20] *Administrative Rule* R277-323(14).

evaluation scores from SSSD showed that 25 teachers received an average score of 2.69/3, but many teachers received a 3 on most elements of their evaluation despite student performance data indicating opportunities to improve. Only one teacher received a score below 2 in the sample we collected. This lack of variation in performance evaluations creates an opportunity for the district to improve, but school administrators are ultimately limited in the scores they can provide teachers. Without enough differentiation, it becomes difficult to identify both high-performing and low-performing teachers.

In Sections 2.1 and 2.2 we make several recommendations to SSSD on steps it can take to improve its evaluation system. We recommend the Legislature consider an in-depth follow-up audit of teacher and principal performance in Utah's public education system focused on addressing how student data is used, potential challenges in ***Utah Code*** and *Administrative Rule*, and how evaluations are impacting and improving teacher performance overall.

RECOMMENDATION 2.4

The Legislature should consider an audit on teacher evaluation systems focused on the role of student data in evaluations, whether potential limitations exist within ***Utah Code*** and/or *Administrative Rule*, and how the evaluation system could be improved to drive teacher and student performance.

South Summit Schools Should Improve Their Use of Student Data and Teacher Collaboration to Impact Student Learning

BACKGROUND

The *Best Practice Handbook for Student Achievement in Public Education* contains 10 practices for school principals. Our audit work identified two areas where we believe South Summit school principals should focus to strengthen teaching and learning within their schools: teacher collaboration and robust data analysis.

FINDING 3.1
South Summit School District Can Better Use Data to Improve Student Learning

RECOMMENDATION 3.1
South Summit School District should administer universal screeners in all schools throughout the year to gather data on student learning needs early and create intervention groups based on those identified learning needs.

RECOMMENDATION 3.2
South Summit School District should adopt best practices which allow for small-group and individualized interventions throughout all schools and grades to remediate student learning gaps and improve student skills. These interventions should be research-based and focused on gaps in students' learning as evidenced by data.

RECOMMENDATION 3.3
South Summit School District should develop a system that regularly identifies students in need of support and use that system to track interventions to ensure students are progressing. School leaders should be trained in these resources to allow school teams throughout the district to routinely use data to identify student needs and develop appropriate plans to intervene to improve student learning outcomes.

FINDING 3.2
District and School Leadership Can Improve the Quality of Teacher Collaboration Meetings by Focusing On Student Learning

RECOMMENDATION 3.4
South Summit School District should ensure principals are effectively evaluating teacher collaboration meetings throughout the district. Principals, in turn, should ensure that best practices for teacher collaboration are being used, including regular use of student data and discussions of instructional strategies to improve student learning. Teacher collaboration time should be focused on student learning and not used for administrative purposes.

CONCLUSION

Student proficiency on the RISE exam has declined since 2019. To address this, schools should improve their use of student data and strengthen intervention systems. Additionally, teacher collaboration meetings should better focus on student achievement and adhere to best practices.

Chapter 3
South Summit Schools Should Improve Their Use of Student Data And Teacher Collaboration to Impact Student Learning

Our *Best Practice Handbook for Student Achievement in Public Education* contains 10 practices for school principals.[21] Our audit work identified two areas where we believe school principals should focus to strengthen teaching and learning within South Summit School District (SSSD) schools: teacher collaboration and robust data analysis. We found opportunities for school leaders to leverage data as part of a robust intervention system to identify and remedy learning gaps. This is explored in Section 3.1. We also found that school leaders can improve the teacher collaboration process by better incorporating best practices. This is explored in Section 3.2.

Best Practices for School Principals

- LEA-Aligned School Plans
- Principal Stakeholder Engagement
- School Expectations
- Frequent Classroom Observation
- Teacher Evaluation Rubrics
- LEA-Aligned Instructional Goals
- **Teacher Collaboration**
- **Robust Data Analysis**
- Schoolwide Teams
- Community Support

As mentioned in Chapter 1, SSSD requested this audit to identify areas for growth. We believe this demonstrates a willingness to improve and are grateful for the collaboration and support we received from school leaders during this audit. This chapter will help school leaders identify key areas they should focus on to improve student learning.

3.1 South Summit School District Can Better Use Data to Improve Student Learning

Our office found that South Summit schools can better leverage data to support student learning. As shown in Chapter 1, we analyzed data on RISE, the state's standards-based exam, and found that SSSD's student performance is the lowest among its peers. We believe that this lack of improvement in proficiency is partially attributable to schools not effectively using data to identify and improve student learning needs. We examine each of the components of an effective intervention system below and make suggestions on what can be improved. Specifically, schools can implement the following three practices:

- Better leverage screeners to identify student learning gaps.
- Use smaller and focused intervention groups.

[21] Office of the Legislative Auditor General, *The Best Practice Handbook for Student Achievement in Public Education* (Report No. 2025-13), 61.

- Have more regular progress monitoring.

Schools Should Leverage Screeners To Identify Student Learning Gaps

South Summit schools should be using data early and often to identify gaps and intervene to improve students' understanding. An effective intervention system begins with students completing evidence-based assessments, known as screeners. These screening exams should be administered at least three times per year. Screeners are "a systematic process for identifying students who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes."[22] In other words, they measure what students *should* know against what they *do* know in various subjects. By periodically screening students, teachers receive better data on how to remediate gaps.

South Summit schools are not uniformly utilizing screeners. We conducted interviews with administrators, teachers, and district staff to identify the screeners used to assess student learning needs at the beginning of each year. The schools use a variety of software, such as Acadience or CaptiReadBasix. However, administrators report that the data could be better leveraged to inform interventions and instruction across the different schools.

Decisions over curriculum and supplemental learning materials are made through collaboration between schools, the district, and the board. The district can play a stronger role in ensuring students in every grade have access to sufficient screening resources to help schools identify learning needs as early as possible. The district has developed its own assessments designed to measure student proficiency on core standards that we believe could serve as effective screeners. We recommend that each SSSD school, in conjunction with the district, discuss and implement a robust screening system to identify student learning needs. This data can improve schools' subsequent intervention efforts.

Recommendation 3.1

South Summit School District should administer universal screeners in all schools throughout the year to gather data on student learning needs early and create intervention groups based on those identified learning needs.

[22] AIR, *Guidance for District Leadership on Multi-Tiered System of Supports,* January 2025, 3.

Intervention Groups Should Be Small and Focused On Remediating Gaps in Student Learning

South Summit Schools have created time for interventions, but the intervention groups are often too large to allow for targeted reteaching. These interventions are also not remediating student learning gaps, as evidenced by the district's RISE data, but instead focus on classroom makeup work. Intervention best practices recommend that students struggling with a particular concept should be placed in small intervention groups based on student learning data. Intervention time should be focused on filling in learning gaps and improving student skills as evidenced by data, not on classroom makeup work.



South Summit schools have created time for interventions, but the intervention groups are often too large to allow for targeted reteaching.

Large intervention groups that are not clearly focused on identified learning needs do not provide effective support for student learning. We found that intervention groups were very large in the middle and high schools. When groups are too large, teachers lose the ability to provide targeted instruction based on specific learning needs. However, the goal of intervention time is not simply to have small groups but to provide students an opportunity to develop and practice key skills and concepts.

Teachers and administrators also report that students can select which classroom they would like to go to for intervention and that some of the intervention time is focused on making up classwork, not reteaching. As can be seen in an analysis in Section 3.2, we found no correlation between grades and proficiency on RISE. We believe that focusing on classroom makeup work rather than remediating learning gaps has contributed to the intervention systems not improving student outcomes at the secondary level.

Without the right data to guide interventions, schools cannot effectively place students into intervention groups and cannot provide targeted instruction. For this reason, the purpose of the intervention time in SSSD schools should be reevaluated. We recommend that SSSD schools develop intervention systems that allow for small groups and are focused on student learning needs as evidenced by quantitative data related to mastery of standards.

Recommendation 3.2

South Summit School District should adopt best practices that allow for small-group and individualized interventions throughout all schools and grades to remediate student learning gaps and improve student skills. These interventions should be research-based and focused on gaps in students' learning as evidenced by data related to mastery of standards.

Regular Progress Monitoring Can Help Schools Understand the Effect of Their Interventions

South Summit schools are not routinely using data to monitor student progress, which can cause students needing support to be overlooked.

South Summit schools are not routinely using data to monitor student progress, which can cause students needing support to be overlooked. Effective schools rely on multiple sources of data to understand barriers to student learning and routinely monitor that data to determine whether their attempts to intervene are working. This process is known as progress monitoring. We found opportunities for school administrators to better monitor students' progress by relying on the data they have available during leadership discussions and team meetings to track student academics, behavior, and coursework.

Regularly Reviewing Data Can Improve Student Learning. ***Utah Code*** requires local education agencies (LEAs) to "use progress-based assessments as part of a plan to identify schools, teachers, and students that need remediation and determine the type and amount of…resources to implement remediation."[23] When implemented properly, progress monitoring includes the utilization of "reliable and valid measures to (1) assess students' performance, (2) quantify a student's rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction or intervention, and (3) evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and intervention." In other words, LEAs should monitor data to see if the intervention is working for a particular student.[24]

Past audits have identified the power of using effective progress monitoring systems. In our audit of Park City School District, we found that the district was

[23] ***Utah Code*** 53G-4-402(1)(c).

[24] AIR Center of Multi-Tiered System of Supports. "Multi-Tiered System of Supports Within Schools: The What and The How." January 2025.

using software to routinely track student performance.[25] The system allowed school and district administrators to determine whether interventions were having a positive impact on student performance. Similarly, in our *Best Practice Handbook for Student Achievement in Public Education*, we explained how Lakeview Elementary in Provo City School District was using data to track whether interventions were improving student outcomes.[26]

Schools Are Not Relying on Data to Identify Students or Track Interventions. After observing meetings where administrators and staff discussed students' academic and behavioral needs and interviewing teachers and administrators, we found that people reported different methods for identifying students for intervention. Based on these observations, we believe SSSD can use data more consistently to identify students for intervention.

Using the district's Performance Matters software, we pulled and examined a list of students with high numbers of behavioral incidents within the high school. We then compared that list to the meeting minutes and agendas for the high school's student support team meeting. Only one of those students appears to have been discussed. We also looked at students who were either trending toward chronic absenteeism or nearly chronic and found similar results: The school does not appear to have identified these students for intervention.

This test illustrates a broader problem: Despite Performance Matters housing a robust dataset that would allow each school to proactively monitor students' success and academic risks, it is not currently being utilized to identify students at risk of failure or those who are struggling. When we asked principals about the Performance Matters platform, they stated that they have received little to no formal training on how to utilize its data features. This must be remedied.

District software contains information on attendance, behavior, and student academic performance that schools can use to make better data-based decisions. We recommend that the district collaborate with school leaders to identify ways they can use district software within their leadership meetings to find students in need of intervention and monitor their progress. Administrators at each school, in turn, should establish intervention criteria for each element (academics, social/emotional, and behavioral) and begin utilizing Performance Matters or another platform to monitor their students' progress. By using data to identify

[25] *A Systemic Performance Audit of Park City School District* (Report No.2023-11), 57.

[26] *Best Practice Handbook for Student Achievement in Public Education* (Report No. 2025-13), 53.

students for intervention and monitor their progress, schools can ensure all students receive the learning support they need.

Recommendation 3.3

South Summit School District should develop a system that regularly identifies students in need of support and use that system to track interventions to ensure students are progressing. School leaders should be trained in these resources to allow school teams throughout the district to routinely use data to identify student needs and develop appropriate plans to intervene to improve student learning outcomes.

3.2 District and School Leadership Can Improve the Quality of Teacher Collaboration Meetings by Focusing On Student Learning

Screeners, interventions, and progress monitoring all come together in teacher collaboration meetings—sometimes referred to as professional learning communities (PLCs). In SSSD schools, current PLC meetings vary widely in quality and focus on student achievement. They should be improved to ensure students receive high-quality instruction that aligns with state standards. We found that in many cases, receiving a good grade in class did not correlate with performing well on the RISE exam, suggesting opportunities to improve alignment between grading, instruction, and standards, all of which should be topics of discussion within a PLC. Principals should be playing a stronger role in guiding and overseeing PLC meetings to ensure a consistent focus on student performance.

Performance in Class Does Not Correlate with Performance on RISE

We analyzed the correlation between student grades in class and RISE data and found that in most classes we sampled, doing well in class did not highly with proficiency on the end-of-year RISE exam.

We analyzed the correlation between student grades in class and RISE data and found that in most classes we sampled, doing well in class did not highly correlate with proficiency on the end-of-year RISE exam. There is also wide variation among classes when it comes to the correlation between performance on RISE and grades. The weak relationship between classroom grades and standardized test performance suggests that grades may not consistently reflect student proficiency on state standards. This finding is similar to what the

Utah Education Policy Center (UEPC) found during its needs assessments of SSSD schools: Most schools only partially aligned curriculum with Utah State Standards across all grade levels. As discussed in the Best Practice Handbook, our office found high-quality curriculum to be the most significant predictor of student success, but most teachers use instructional materials that may not be evidence-based. We believe that stronger collaboration and structure from school principals will help teachers focus their efforts on using curriculum that is aligned to state standards.

Teacher Collaboration Meetings Could Improve Focus on Student Learning

Teacher collaboration around specific learning goals is perhaps the single-greatest opportunity within a school to improve the quality of instruction. In an analysis of top-performing literacy teams in the state, researchers concluded, "There is no other way to improve instructional practice at scale in schools than to organize groups of adult learners (teachers) to work on problems of instructional practice."[27] Professional learning communities are most effective when teacher teams focus on student learning outcomes and review data to evaluate student progress on district and state performance standards to inform instruction and guide interventions. Data guides the discussion each step of the way to ensure students master the standards.



In an analysis of top-performing literacy teams in the state, researchers concluded, "There is no other way to improve instructional practice at scale in schools than to organize groups of adult learners (teachers) to work on problems of instructional practice."

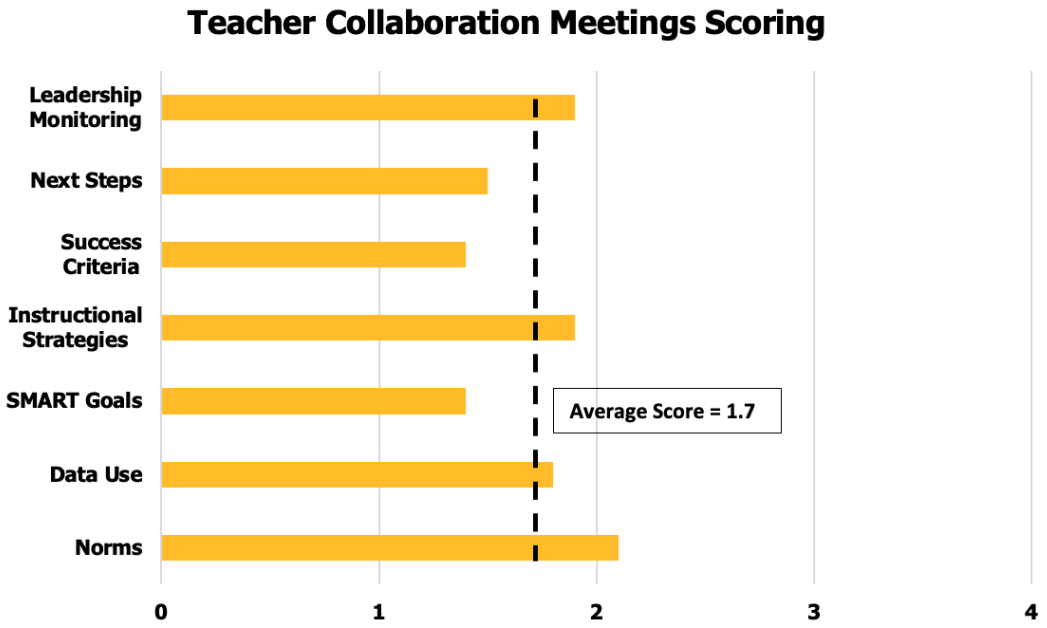
Teacher Collaboration Meetings Within SSSD Can Better Utilize Data to Inform Instruction. We attended collaboration meetings throughout SSSD schools and evaluated them against a best-practice rubric to measure their effectiveness. We found that adherence to best practice varied widely by both school and team. Some teams worked collaboratively—creating common formative assessments and discussing student data—while one team spent the meeting expressing frustration.

Additionally, several of the meetings we observed in SSSD schools focused on administrative tasks. PLC meetings are also often used for staff training and professional development. While professional development is important, we believe that this is a misuse of collaboration time that could be spent reviewing student data and discussing how to adjust instruction.

[27] Utah Leading through Effective, Actionable, and Dynamic Education (ULEAD), *Effective First Grade Literacy Teaching Teams* (Utah State Board of Education, September 2024), 11.

Figure 3.2 contains a graph showing the general areas we examined within the meetings and how we ranked meetings overall in those areas. We used a rubric for evaluating PLC meetings to analyze how well they functioned.[28] On average, meetings scored a 1.7/4, indicating opportunities to improve. One key takeaway from our observations is that teacher collaboration meetings throughout the district can better employ data to drive instructional discussions. We also believe this data should be better used to inform team goals and instructional strategies to improve student learning.

Figure 3.1 Teacher Collaboration Meetings Typically Scored Low on Using Best Practices. We observed teacher collaboration meetings throughout the district and found a general lack of discussion on student data, SMART goals, and instructional strategy.



Source: Auditor generated.

School Leaders Should Provide Clear Guidance to Improve Teacher Collaboration Meetings. SSSD policy states that part of a teacher's summative evaluation should include a review of teacher collaboration. However, as we reviewed evaluation records, we did not find evidence that teacher collaboration was being formally evaluated. We also observed multiple instances where administration was present, but the meeting did not have clear success criteria or focus on student achievement. We believe that this lack of administrator feedback has caused teacher collaboration meetings to become less focused on student learning and more focused on administrative tasks.

[28] The rubric, titled "Collaborative Team Rubric," was created by Solution Tree, which recognizes schools for their PLC work. It can be found in Appendix B.

We recommend that SSSD leadership set clearer expectations for how collaboration is to take place, including how to use student data, how to evaluate instructional practices, and how to prioritize the discussion of student learning. Principals should routinely evaluate the quality of teacher collaboration and identify ways they can improve the PLC process so that their schools can better identify students in need and support them.

Recommendation 3.4

South Summit School District should ensure principals are effectively evaluating teacher collaboration meetings throughout the district. Principals, in turn, should ensure that best practices for teacher collaboration are being used, including regular use of student data and discussions of instructional strategies, to improve student learning. Teacher collaboration time should be focused on student learning and not used for administrative purposes.

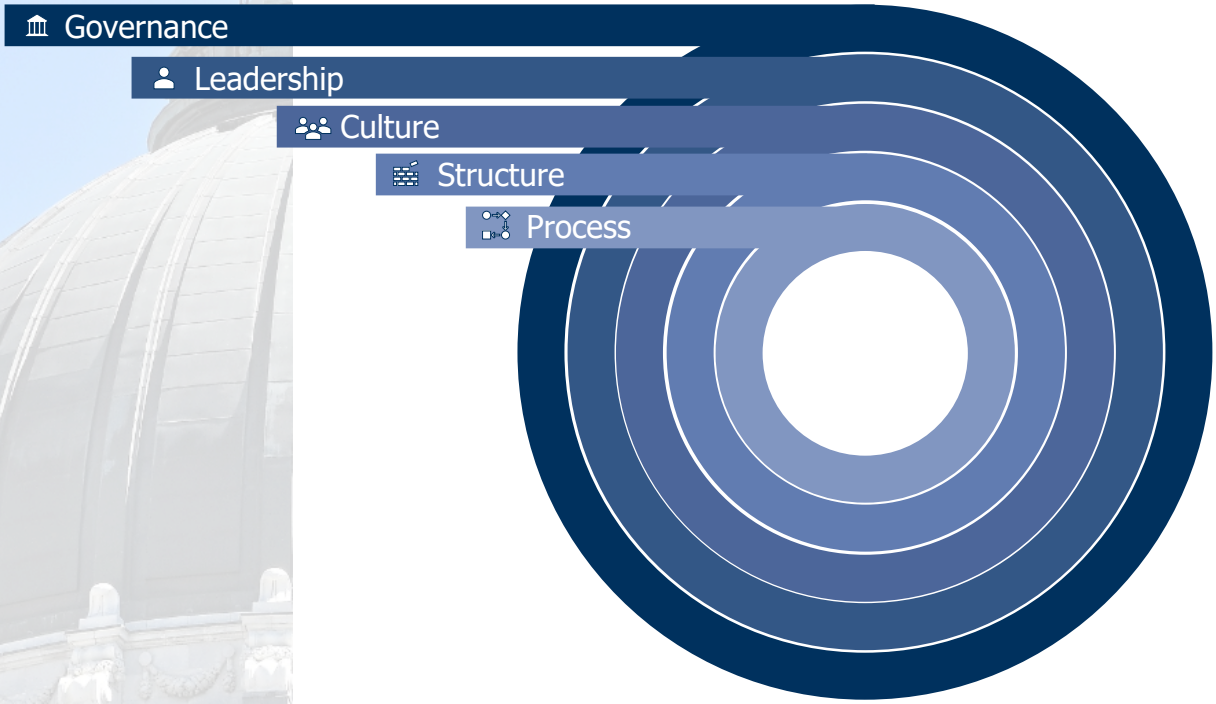




Complete List of Audit Recommendations

THE FIVE LAYERS OF CAUSE

We developed the Five Layers of Cause Framework to assist leaders in identifying the causes of organizational success and failure. To truly improve as an organization, leaders must understand the causes of major risks. Only when leaders understand these causes and their roots can they make meaningful improvements. Root causes are deeper and more fundamental.



The five layers of cause are defined below. They are ranked from most impactful in organizational change to least. The next page identifies the layer of cause in each recommendation.

GOVERNANCE

The laws and rules that establish the organization's mission, accountability, and funding. Governance empowers the organization with the leadership and resources needed to achieve meaningful results.

LEADERSHIP

The competency and character of the leaders of the organization. Leadership is the decisive force that transforms vision into action and effort into results.

CULTURE

The collective beliefs, values, and behaviors of the organization. An organization's culture can determine employee engagement and morale, willingness to innovate, and quality of product.

STRUCTURE

The policies and standards that guide an organization's work. Structures direct the flow of work and establish what is and is not acceptable.

PROCESS

The steps taken to accomplish a task. Processes are the logistics—the capital, workflows, timing, and practices—that move work along.

Complete List of Audit Recommendations

This report made the following eleven recommendations. The numbering convention assigned to each recommendation consists of its chapter followed by a period and recommendation number within that chapter.

Recommendation 1.1 (Governance)

South Summit School Board should improve its oversight over student performance by regularly reviewing data on student learning, academic achievement, and other key metrics outlined in the board's strategic plan during public meetings. Regular board discussion on student learning can improve accountability for student performance throughout the district and message that student learning is the board's top priority.

Recommendation 1.2 (Structure)

South Summit School Board should work with the superintendent to develop a robust and complete strategic plan that includes all the necessary components listed within this chapter. This plan should include clear performance targets for student learning and provide guidance on how the district will improve student learning outcomes.

Recommendation 1.3 (Structure)

South Summit School Board should formally adopt a superintendent evaluation system that includes clear success measures tied to the board's strategic plan and student learning. This evaluation should happen at least annually and ensure that the superintendent is given feedback on the areas where they need to improve to fulfill the board's vision.

Recommendation 2.1 (Structure)

South Summit School District should refine its educator evaluation system to better identify top-performing teachers and elevate effective instructional practices to improve student learning outcomes. The system should also better identify teachers who need remediation and provide the needed support.

Recommendation 2.2 (Structure)

South Summit School District should work with principals to improve the quality of classroom instruction by simplifying its evaluation tools to focus on clear, quantifiable measures of student learning. The new evaluation system should provide more effective feedback to teachers and help principals and teachers understand the quality of instruction based on student learning data.

Recommendation 2.3 (Process)

South Summit School District principals should evaluate teacher goals to ensure they connect to student achievement, address instructional deficiencies, and can be measured. Once set, principals should support teachers and hold them accountable as they seek to reach their goals to improve student learning.

Recommendation 2.4 (Governance)

The Legislature should consider an audit on teacher evaluation systems focused on the role of student data in evaluations, whether potential limitations exist within ***Utah Code*** and/or

Administrative Rule, and how the evaluation system could be improved to drive teacher and student performance.

Recommendation 3.1 (Structure)

South Summit School District should administer universal screeners in all schools throughout the year to gather data on student learning needs early and create intervention groups based on those identified learning needs.

Recommendation 3.2 (Structure)

South Summit School District should adopt best practices that allow for small-group and individualized interventions throughout all schools and grades to remediate student learning gaps and improve student skills. These interventions should be research-based and focused on gaps in students' learning as evidenced by data related to mastery of standards.

Recommendation 3.3 (Structure)

South Summit School District should develop a system that regularly identifies students in need of support and use that system to track interventions to ensure students are progressing. School leaders should be trained in these resources to allow school teams throughout the district to routinely use data to identify student needs and develop appropriate plans to intervene to improve student learning outcomes.

Recommendation 3.4 (Leadership)

South Summit School District should ensure principals are effectively evaluating teacher collaboration meetings throughout the district. Principals, in turn, should ensure that best practices for teacher collaboration are being used, including regular use of student data and discussions of instructional strategies, to improve student learning. Teacher collaboration time should be focused on student learning and not used for administrative purposes.



Appendices

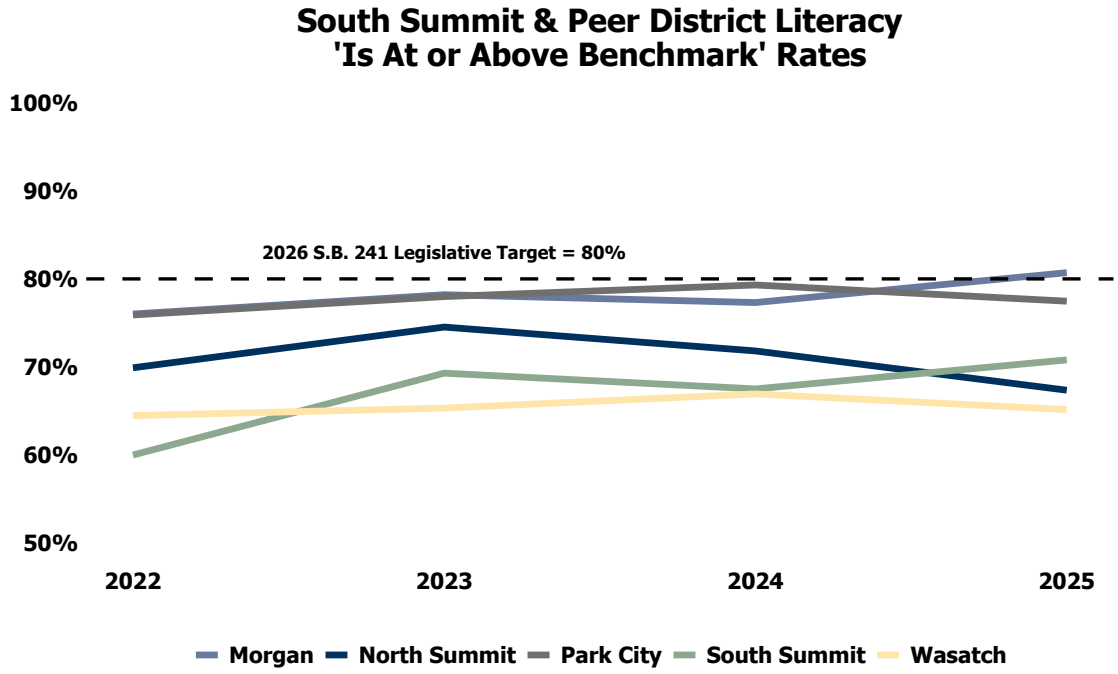


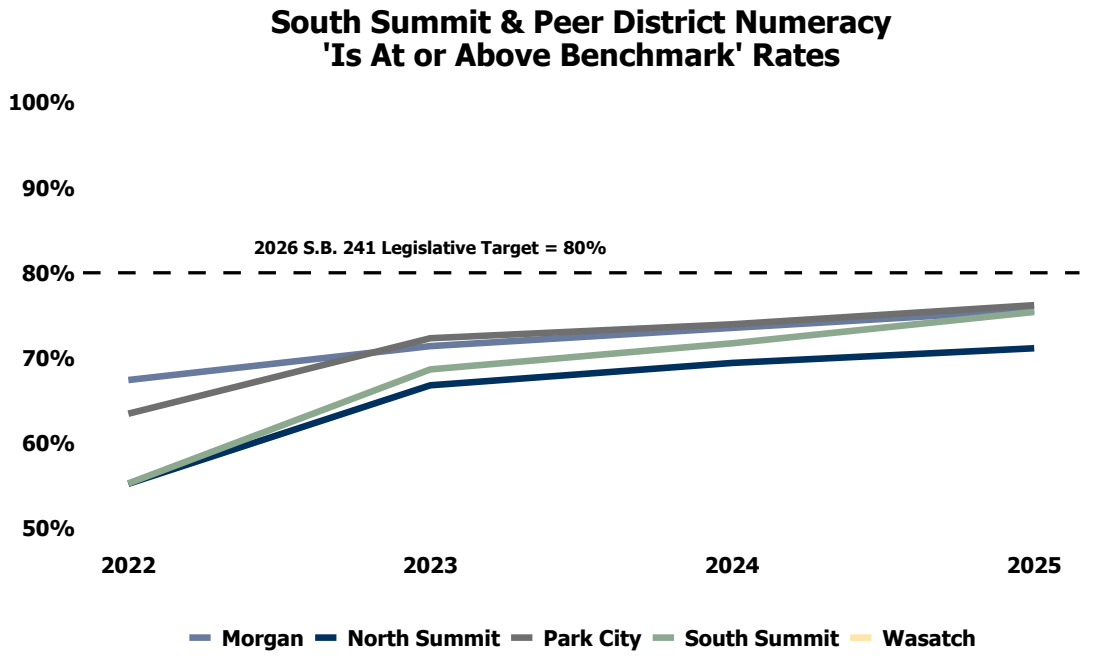
A. Performance Data for South Summit School District



Acadience Early Literacy and Early Numeracy

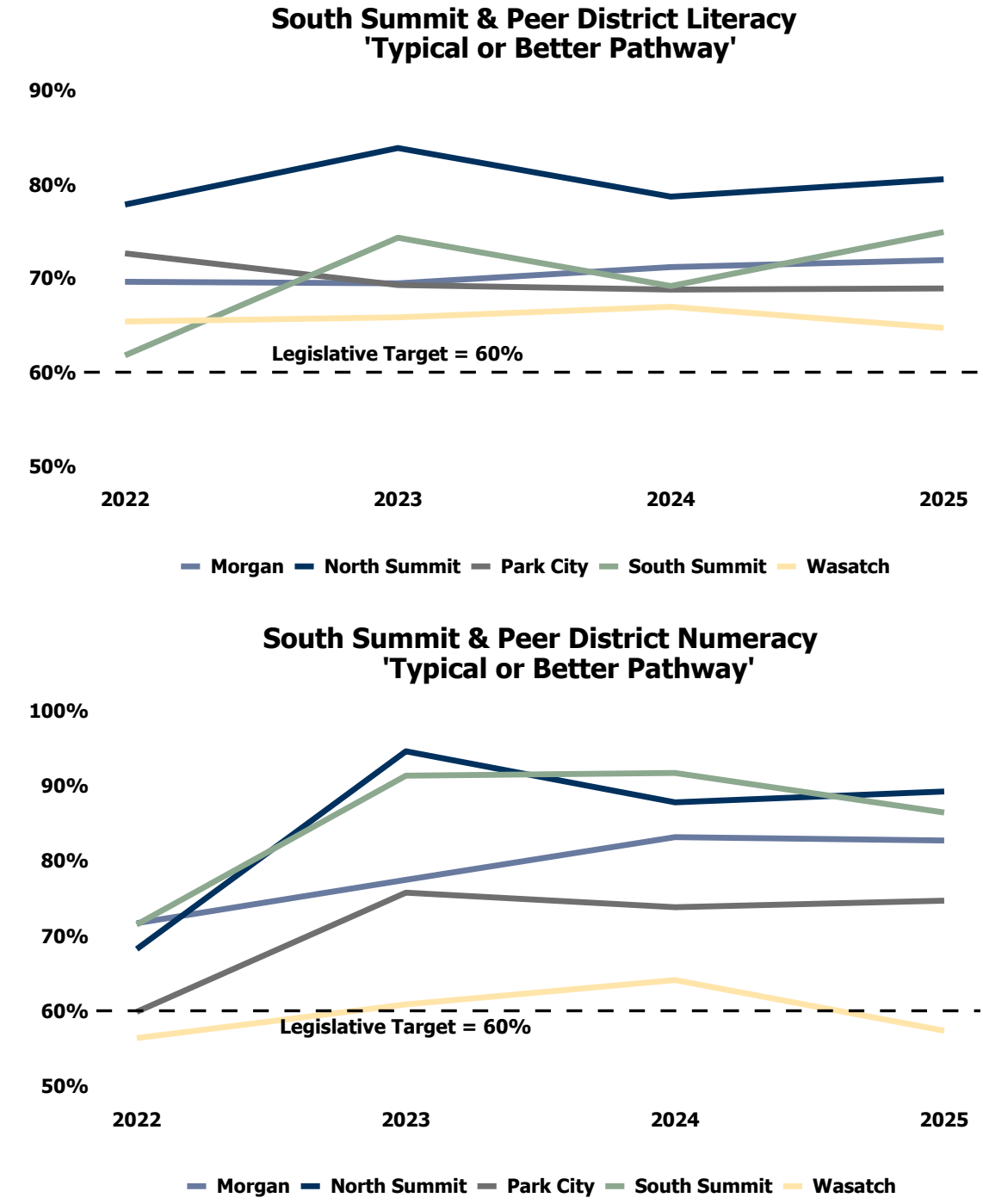
Figure 1 SSSD Has Improved in Early Literacy & Numeracy. SSSD has increased the overall percentage of students who are scoring at or above benchmark on the Acadience exam for early literacy and numeracy. There is still room to improve to meet the new standard outlined in Senate Bill 241 from the 2026 General Session.





Source: Auditor generated.

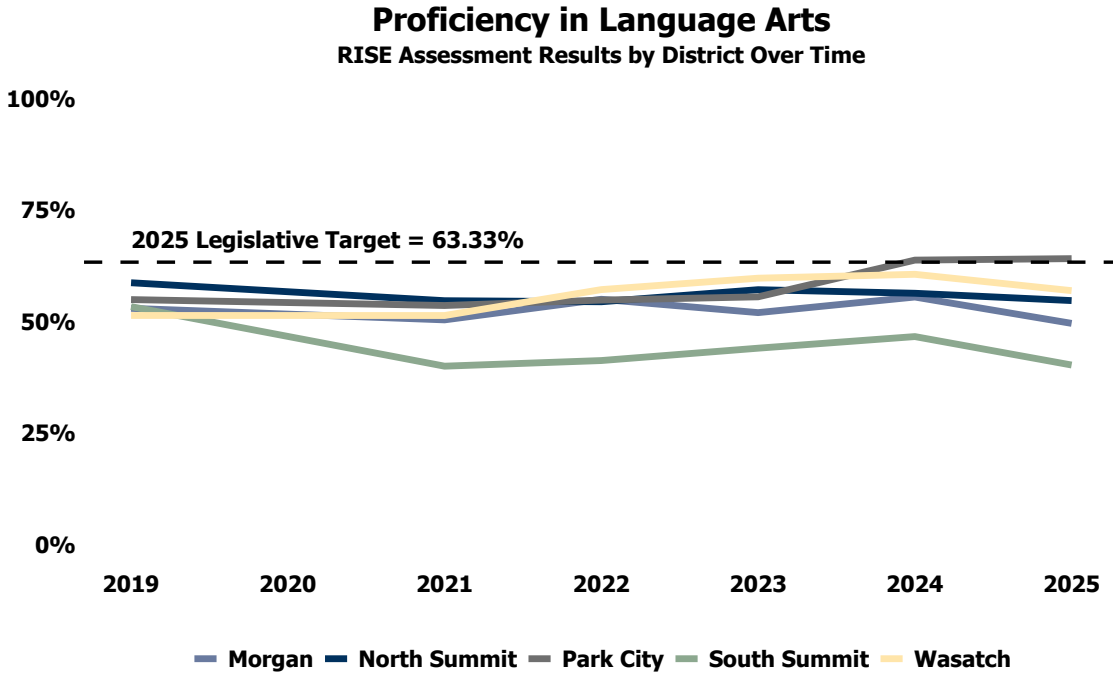
Figure 2 SSSD Has Improved in Early Literacy and Numeracy Pathways. SSSD has also seen growth in the students scoring 'At or Above Typical Growth' on the Acadience literacy and numeracy exams, indicating students are growing even if they are not reaching benchmark.

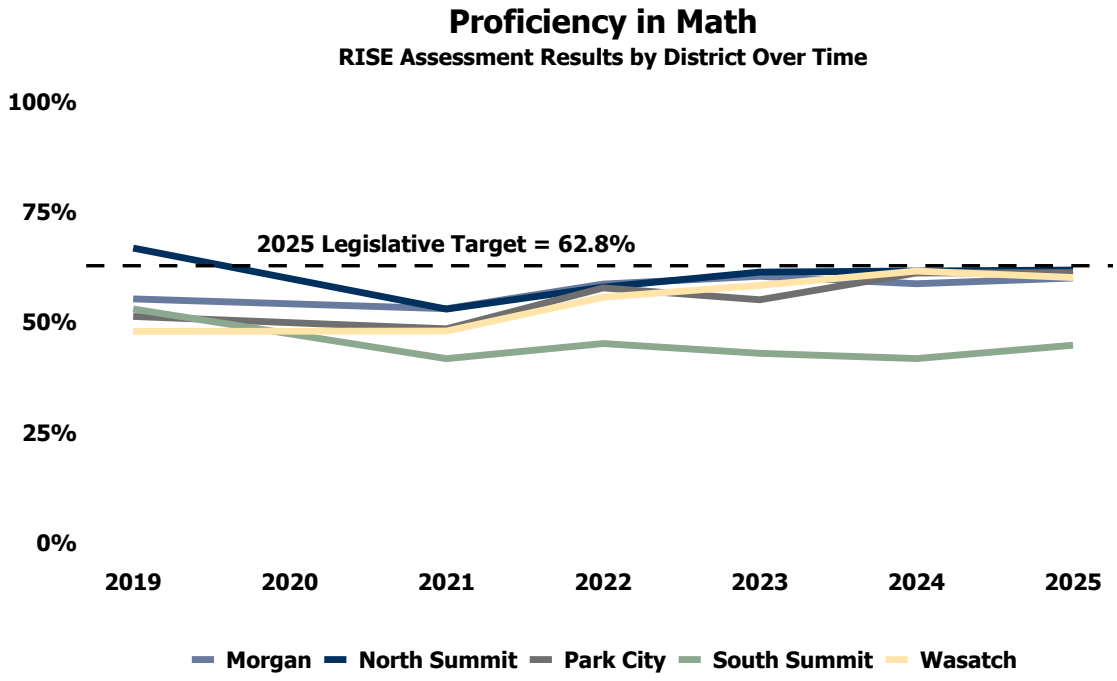


Source: Auditor generated.

RISE Data

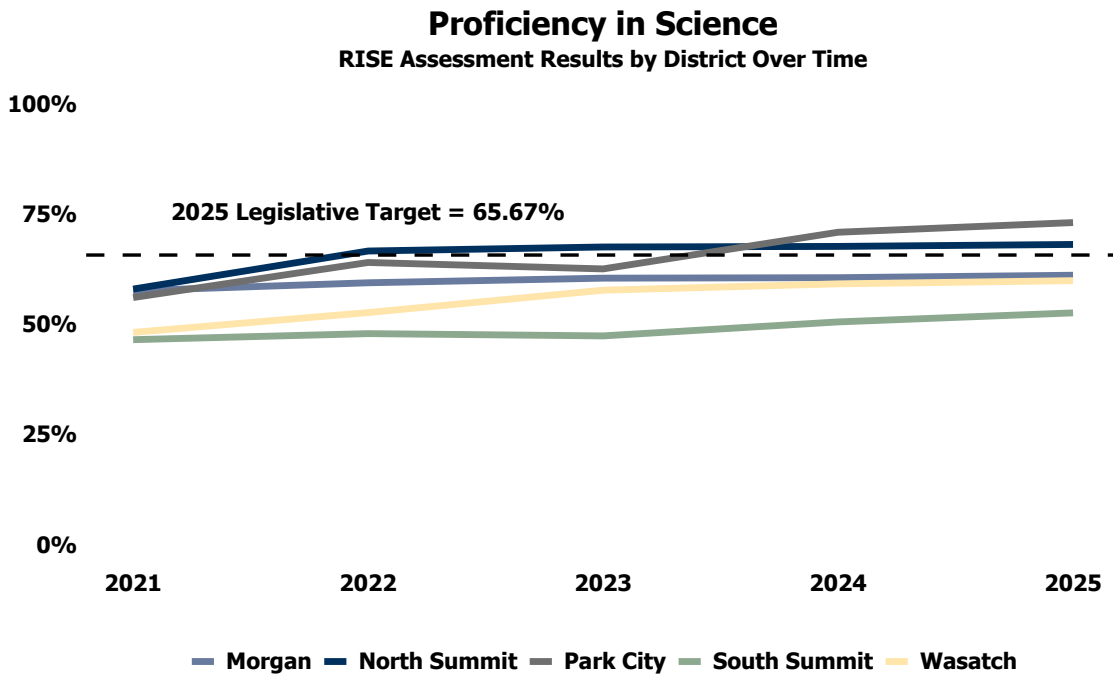
Figure 3 SSSD is Performing Below Peer Districts on All RISE Exams. We analyzed RISE data and looked at how SSSD is performing relative to peer districts on each subject of the RISE exam: English language arts, mathematics, and science. SSSD is below its peer districts on each subject and is performing well below the 2025 legislative targets.





Source: Auditor generated.

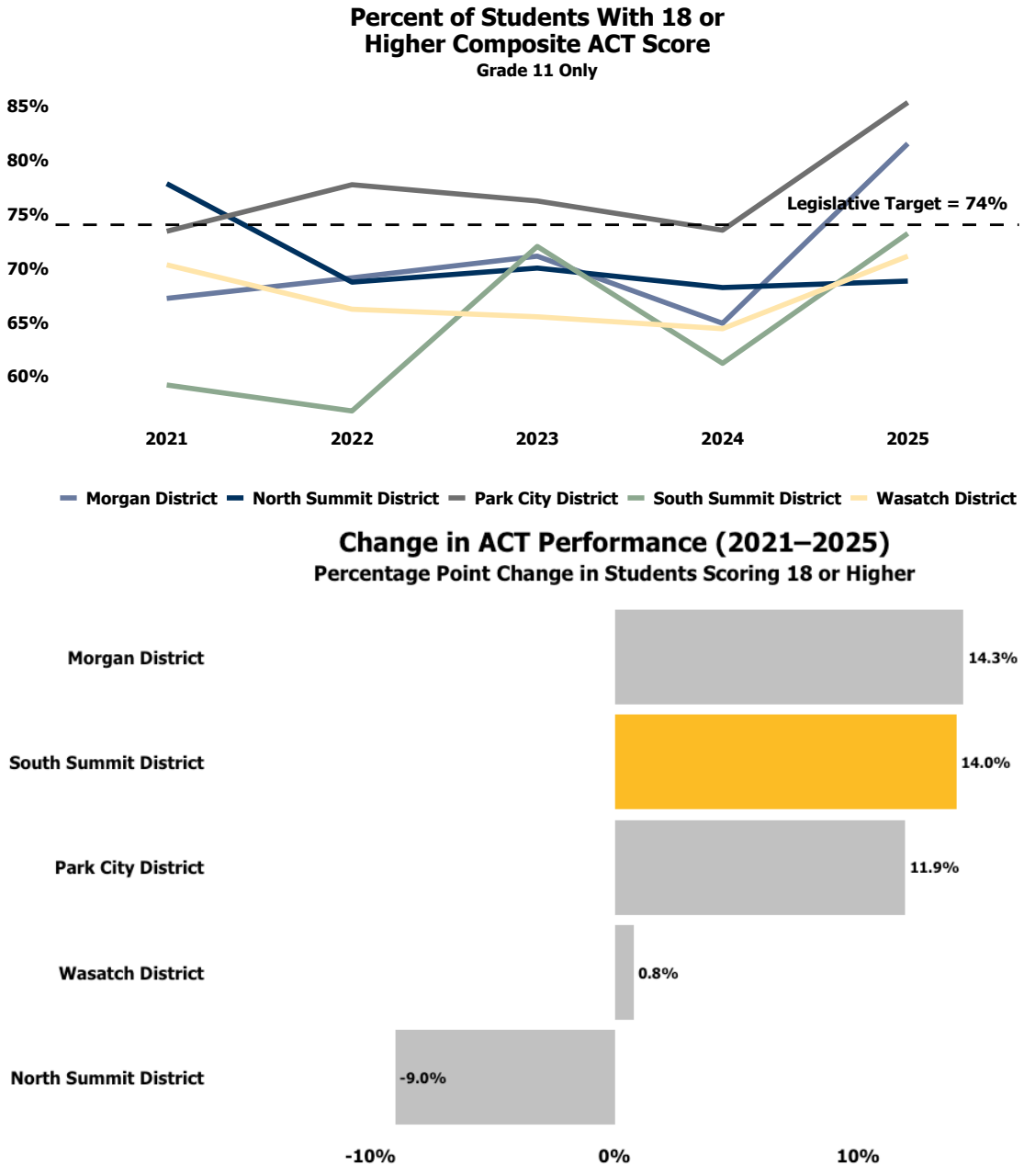
Figure 3 continued SSSD is Performing Below Peer Districts on All RISE Exams. We analyzed RISE data and looked at how SSSD is performing relative to peer districts on each subject of the RISE exam: English language arts, mathematics, and science. SSSD is below its peer districts on each subject and is performing well below the 2025 legislative targets.



Source: Auditor generated.

ACT Data

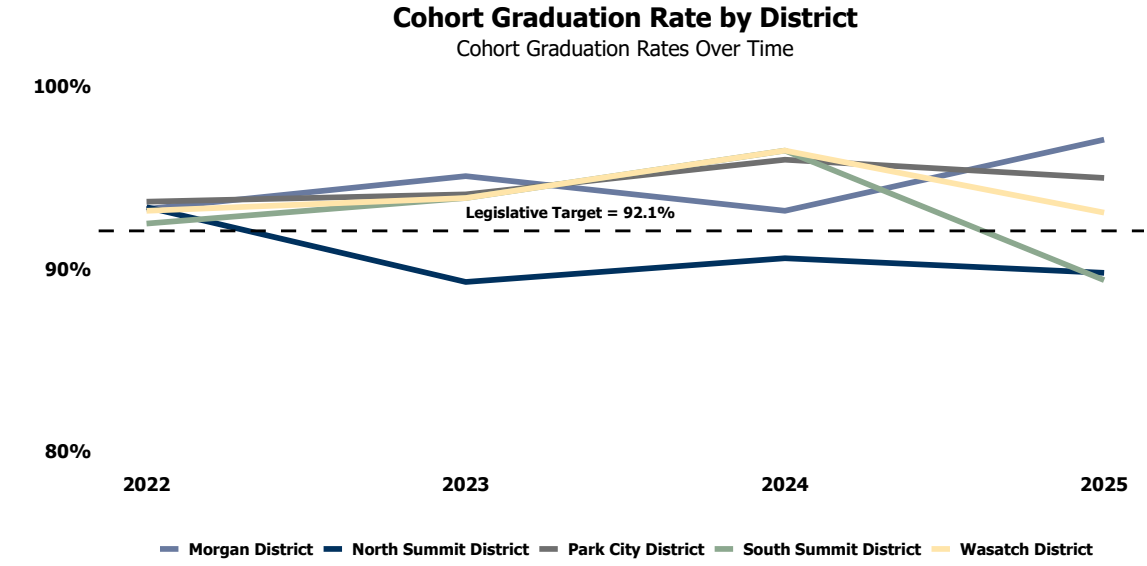
Figure 4 SSSD Has Improved Performance on the ACT Exam. We looked at the percentage of students scoring at least an 18 on their ACT composite score. SSSD has improved its performance on this target and is very close to hitting the legislative target of 74%. The second graph shows that they have increased performance by 14% from 2021-2025.



Source: Auditor generated using USBE data.

Graduation Rate

Figure 5 SSSD Graduation Rate Dropped in 2025 Despite Recent Gains. From 2022-2024, the cohort-graduation rate for South Summit School District gradually increased. However, in 2025 the graduation rate dropped to 89%.



Source: Auditor generated using USBE data.

B. Rubric for Evaluating School Board Meetings



During the audit, our team used this rubric to evaluate school board meetings. The rubric comes from research on effective school board practices.[29]

Appendix A

School Board Video Project Survey

Name of School District:_____ Date:_____

Directions: Please review the entire video. Indicate your perceptions based on the questions below. Feel free to add remarks that can further clarify the effectiveness.

1. Does the meeting appear orderly with attention on agenda?
   a. The members are paying attention to each other.
      (Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very much)
   b. Some members are talking out of turn or engaging side conversations while board business is being conducted.
      (Constantly) 1 2 3 4 5 (Not at all)
   c. The president/chair seemed to be in charge of the meeting.
      (Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (Total control)
2. Where did the board spend the majority of their time?
   - Were instructional issues mentioned during the meeting?
     (Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very much)
   - What consumed most of the time during the meeting? _____
     _____
3. On a scale of 1–5, how much time was spent on student achievement?
   (None) 1 2 3 4 5 (Majority of Meeting)
   - Was accountability mentioned, such as common core?
     (Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (Often)
4. Community input:
   - Did anyone speak other than board members or the superintendent?
     Yes_____ No_____
   - If so, what was the topic?_____
     _____
   - Did the board listen respectfully and attentively to the person speaking?
     (Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very attentive)
     Explain:_____
5. Board member behavior:
   - Did any one member, other than the board president, stand out for taking a lot of time?
     Yes_____ No_____
   - If yes, please describe:_____
     _____
   - Did the meeting flow well? (agenda followed, well organized, easy to follow, etc.)
     Yes_____ No_____
6. Things that stood out as being excessive or a waste of time:
   - _____
   - _____
   - _____
7. Did the board act on policy items?
   Yes_____ No_____
8. Did any member seem to advance their own agenda (like grandstanding and wanting to look good in public)?
   (Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very much)
9. Was the meeting conducted in a business-like manner?
   (Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (Always)
10. Did board members/superintendent seem to have a good working relationship?
    a. Was there evidence of collaboration between the superintendent and board members?
       (None at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very much)
    b. Did board members rely on superintendent for advice/input?
       (None at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very much)
    c. Based on your observation, who appeared in control of the meeting?
       Board members_____ Superintendent_____

[29] Lee, David E., and Daniel W. Eadens. "The Problem: Low-Achieving Districts and Low-Performing Boards." International Journal of Education Policy & Leadership 9, no. 3 (2014). https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1045888.pdf.



C. Collaborative Team Rubric



We used this rubric to evaluate teacher collaboration meetings in SSSD.

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Collaborative Team Rubric

4—Adaptive: Highly Effective Practice, 3—Deliberate: Mostly Effective Practice, 2—Progressing: On the Road to Effective Practice, 1—Emerging: Beginning to Show Signs of Effective Practice	
1. PLC Impact—Norms	
4	Each team member has a role (facilitator, recorder, reporter, timekeeper, and so on). Team leaders reference norms at the beginning of each meeting, and the team lives by these norms in every meeting, so much so that the team minimizes time spent on norms.
3	Team members may have roles, but they do not explicitly use them or function within the role descriptions. Team leaders reference norms at the beginning of each meeting, and the team does its best to use these norms in each meeting.
2	Team leaders reference norms at the beginning of each team meeting. Team members may or may not use roles to affect the team's efficiency.
1	The team has some evidence of roles, but it has not yet established norms (agreements on how to resolve conflicts and work as a team) to guide the team. Team members may have serendipitous roles, but the team does not explicitly state or use them for team efficiency.
1. PLC Impact—Data Use	
4	The team uses quantitative and qualitative data based on teachers' and students' most current needs, not adult convenience or administrative directive. Evidence of learning is valid and reliable, and the team has evaluated it for the appropriate level of rigor. Team members perceive data as evidence of learning, rather than mere numbers. The team seamlessly uses relevant data that it can act on in the next few days. The team brings in student work samples that support formative, summative, or performance assessment data. The team prepared data in advance of the meeting to allow more time to discuss instruction. The team splits meeting time between two days. The team disaggregates data by groups for differentiation or response to intervention, which includes relevant student data for targeted instruction.
3	The team uses relevant data that it can act on in the next week. Evidence of learning is valid and reliable, and the team may have evaluated it for the appropriate level of rigor. The team may or may not bring in student work samples that support formative, summative, or performance assessment data. The team may or may not have prepared data in advance of the meeting to allow more time to discuss instruction. The team may split meeting time between two days. The team disaggregates data in some way.
2	The team uses data that it can act on in the next few weeks. The team may be missing student work samples that support inferences made on formative, summative, or performance assessment data. The team may or may not have prepared data in advance of the meeting to allow more time to discuss instruction. The team may split meeting time between two days to allow for data analysis that reveals the strengths and opportunities for growth that inform instruction. The team might disaggregate data, but not in a meaningful or helpful way that supports instruction.

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1	The team uses data that it can act on, but it does not make the time frame for action clear. The team may be missing student work samples that support inferences made on formative, summative, or performance assessment data. The team may not have prepared data in advance of the meeting to allow more time to discuss instruction. The team does its best in its insufficient time to support data for instruction. The team does not disaggregate data.
1. PLC Impact—SMART Goals	
4	The team consistently sets focused goals that are strategic, measurable, attainable, results oriented, and time bound. All team members understand how to implement and adjust the goals.
3	The team consistently sets focused goals that match at least four of these elements: strategic, measurable, attainable, results oriented, and time bound. All team members understand how to implement the goals.
2	The team consistently sets focused goals that match two of these elements: strategic, measurable, attainable, results oriented, and time bound. At least three-quarters of team members understand how to implement the goals.
1	The team sets goals that match at least one of these elements: strategic, measurable, attainable, results oriented, and time bound.
1. PLC Impact—Instructional Strategies	
4	The team spends more time (a minimum of two-thirds of team time) focused on instruction—or curriculum standards and resources or assessments that support the instructional process—than on any other part of the PLC process. Any team member who discusses a strategy or intervention clearly conveys the steps necessary to best implement that strategy so that team members can implement it and an observer can potentially observe it as successful. The strategy directly connects to the standards' target level of content and rigor. Strategies are targeted to at least three distinct, differentiated student group needs.
3	The team spends time (a minimum of one-half of team time) focused on instruction, or curriculum standards and resources or assessments that support the instructional process. Any team member who discusses a strategy or intervention conveys most of the steps necessary to best implement that strategy. The strategy connects to the standards' target level of content and rigor. Strategies are targeted to at least two distinct, differentiated student group needs.
2	The team spends time (a minimum of one-third of team time) focused on instruction, or curriculum standards and resources or assessments that support the instructional process. Team members who discuss a strategy or intervention convey some of the steps necessary to best implement that strategy. The strategy may or may not connect to the standards' target level of content and rigor. The strategies may not be targeted to differentiated student group needs.
1	The team sees the need to spend more time focused on instruction, or curriculum standards and resources or assessments that support the instructional process. Team members who discuss a strategy or intervention may or may not convey some of the steps necessary to best implement that strategy. The strategy may or may not connect to the standards' target level of content and rigor. The team only addresses whole-group instruction.

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1. PLC Impact—Success Criteria	
4	The team clearly conceived and communicated the vision for successful use of the strategy so that outside observers would clearly know what to expect (what they'd see and hear from the students and the teacher) and look-fors are easily observed. The success criteria successfully and clearly combine the language of the standards, rigor, and implementation, as well as linear steps for using the strategy.
3	The team clearly conceived and communicated the vision for successful use of the strategy so that outside observers would mostly know what to expect (what they'd likely see and hear from the students and the teacher) and look-fors are tied to the process in some way. The success criteria combine the language of the standards, rigor, and implementation.
2	The team may or may not have clearly conceived and communicated the vision for successful use of the strategy so that outside observers might know what to expect (what they'd likely see and hear from the students and the teacher) and look-fors are tied to the process in some way. The success criteria combine at least two of the following indicators: the language of the standards, rigor, and implementation.
1	Some evidence shows that the team has conceived and communicated a vision for successful use of the strategy so that outside observers might know what to expect (what they'd likely see and hear from the students and the teacher) and look-fors are tied to the process in some way. Emerging evidence shows that the success criteria cite at least one of the following indicators: the language of the standards, rigor, and implementation.
1. PLC Impact—Next Steps	
4	At the end of its meeting, the team crafts an achievable agenda for the next meeting, indicating actionable future steps for each team member. All members discuss the implementation of agreed-on next strategies or planned practices, and each member discusses the appropriate evidence of student learning he or she intends to bring to the next meeting.
3	As a result of its meeting, the team crafts an agenda for the next meeting, indicating actionable future steps for most team members. Most members discuss the implementation of agreed-on next strategies or planned practices, and most members discuss possible evidence of student learning they intend to bring to the next meeting.
2	The team crafts a possible agenda for the next meeting, which may or may not be an extension of the current meeting, indicating possible next steps for some team members. Some members discuss the implementation of agreed-on next strategies or planned practices, and some members discuss possible evidence of student learning they intend to bring to the next meeting.
1	The team may or may not craft a possible agenda for the next meeting, which may or may not be an extension of the current meeting, indicating next steps for team members. There is some evidence that members have discussed part of the implementation of agreed-on next strategies or planned practices, and perhaps some members discuss possible evidence of student learning they intend to bring to the next meeting.

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1. PLC Impact—Leadership Monitoring	
4	A representative team member or team leader meets with the building principal to successfully and articulately convey strategies and success criteria. The meeting is timely, focused, and effective. The principal or administrators follow up with formative walkthroughs to confirm that teachers have implemented the strategy and to observe most of the success criteria (at least three-quarters). The building principal regularly shares the most successful strategies with other faculty in some medium to build capacity, maximizing successful instruction.
3	A representative team member or team leader meets with the building principal to convey strategies and success criteria. The meeting is timely, focused, and effective. The principal or administrators follow up with formative walkthroughs to confirm that teachers have implemented the strategy and to observe most of the success criteria (at least one-half).
2	A representative team member or team leader meets with the building principal to convey strategies and success criteria. The meeting may or may not be timely, focused, and effective. The principal or administrators may follow up with formative walkthroughs to confirm that teachers have implemented the strategy and to observe some of the success criteria (at least one-third).
1	A representative team member or team leader may meet with the building principal at some point after teachers' collaboration time. The meeting may or may not be timely, focused, and effective. The principal or administrators may need to follow up with formative walkthroughs to confirm whether teachers have implemented the strategy and to observe the success criteria.

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Agency Response Plan



South Summit School District
Achieving Excellence

September 4, 2026

Kade R. Minchey, CIA, CFE, Auditor General
Office of the Legislative Auditor General
Utah State Capitol Complex
Rebecca Lockhart House Building, Suite W315
P.O. Box 145315
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-5315

Dear Mr. Minchey:

South Summit School District appreciates the opportunity to respond to the recommendations resulting from the Office of the Legislative Auditor General's Systemic Performance Audit of our practices. Throughout the process, the OLAG team demonstrated professionalism, objectivity, and a genuine commitment to understanding our schools and systems. The partnership was candid, constructive, and grounded in a shared desire to improve outcomes for students.

South Summit volunteered for this audit because meaningful improvement requires an honest examination of our systems. OLAG provided an independent perspective that helped us recognize effective practices, identify areas where implementation has not yet matched our intentions, and determine where greater clarity, consistency, and accountability are needed. The partnership has already produced several benefits for South Summit School District. It strengthened our commitment and focus on high-quality Tier 1 instruction and the experience students receive in every classroom; prompted a closer examination of the consistency and effectiveness of our professional learning communities and multi-tiered systems of support; and reinforced the importance of using timely student data to adjust instruction and monitor academic growth. The process also sharpened conversations about aligning Board priorities, district resources, leadership practices, and classroom-level actions. Finally, it clarified the need for better-defined expectations, responsible owners, implementation timelines, and evidence that demonstrates whether improvement efforts are producing the intended results.

We are especially grateful that OLAG's work did more than identify areas for improvement. It created greater organizational clarity and urgency around the work that matters most. The audit provides a valuable framework for moving from good intentions and isolated successes toward coherent districtwide systems that can be sustained over time and result in improved outcomes for students.

We accept responsibility for thoughtfully addressing the audit recommendations. The following pages provide our response to each recommendation, identify those responsible for implementation, outline the actions we will take, describe the evidence we will use to demonstrate progress, and establish anticipated timelines for completion. Our goal is meaningful and lasting improvement, not simply procedural compliance; anything less would be less than our best.

South Summit School District values continuous improvement, transparency, and responsible stewardship of the public trust. We are grateful to the OLAG team for approaching this work as a professional partnership and for providing insights that will help us better serve our students, employees, families, and community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Greg Maughan
Superintendent
South Summit School District

Matt Weller
Board President
South Summit School District

SSSD Audit Response

Chapter 1

Recommendation 1.1 Governance

South Summit School Board should improve its oversight over student performance by regularly reviewing data on student learning, academic achievement, and other key metrics outlined in the board's strategic plan during public meetings. Regular board discussion on student learning can improve accountability for student performance throughout the district and message that student learning is the board's top priority.

District Response: Board Leadership tentatively agrees, subject to a vote by the full board following the Office of the Legislative Auditor General's presentation of the SSSD Systemic Performance Audit at its October meeting.

Contacts: Matt Weller, Board President, matt.weller@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301 ext. 4123

Greg Maughan, EdD, Superintendent, greg.maughan@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

What: Since the Board's initial longitudinal data presentation in 2024, its expectations for data review have continued to mature. The Board now expects data presentations to extend beyond State Data Gateway summaries and include longitudinal trends, disaggregated results, local measures, and additional context necessary to better understand student performance and district progress. The SSSD Board will increase the prioritization of discussions on student learning and academic achievement. Through the strategic planning process described in Recommendation 1.2, the board will establish an ongoing cycle of setting clear performance targets, reviewing student-performance data related to those targets, and aligning resources to support progress toward the targets.

How: One of SSSD's core values is that the School Board, superintendent, and district office staff exist to support the critical work that occurs each day in classrooms and schools. In spring 2026, SSSD began revising the Board Strategic Plan. The district shifted to a school-driven, grassroots model, rather than the traditional top-down strategic planning process used in many school districts. During summer 2026, school administrators conducted in-depth data analyses and root-cause analyses that resulted in a two-year strategic plan for each school. Each school established two-year student-outcome goals based on current performance data, identified gaps in student learning, and selected a high-impact student-learning problem to address. These student-outcome goals serve as the performance targets that school administrators and faculty will work to achieve.

As schools completed their planning, a clear throughline emerged across their student-learning problems and student-outcome goals. The district office, superintendent, and School Board now have the opportunity to support this work by ensuring that strategic planning at the district and board levels provides resources, removes barriers, and strengthens the critical work of classrooms and schools.

Through this strategic planning process, the board will establish clear performance targets based on student-performance data and school student-outcome goals. The board will evaluate the structure of its meetings and identify opportunities to prioritize discussions of student data, instructional data, and progress toward the established

performance targets. The board will adopt a schedule for student-data presentations and discussions and will determine the documentation needed to demonstrate that resource requests align with district performance targets and support classrooms and schools.

The Board will evaluate the impact of their implementation of this recommendation yearly.

Documentation:

Copies of the SSSD School Board Strategic Plan with clear performance targets set.

Agendas and minutes of school board meetings that reflect the increased time spent discussing student learning and performance.

The outlined schedule of student data presentations and discussions.

Timetable: See attached Integrated Response Timeline

Recommendation 1.2 Structure

South Summit School Board should work with the superintendent to develop a robust and complete strategic plan that includes all the necessary components listed within this chapter. This plan should include clear performance targets for student learning and provide guidance on how the district will improve student learning outcomes.

District Response: Board leadership tentatively agrees, subject to a vote by the full board following the Office of the Legislative Auditor General's presentation of the SSSD Systemic Performance Audit at its October meeting.

Contacts: Matt Weller, Board President, matt.weller@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301 ext. 4123

Greg Maughan, EdD, Superintendent, greg.maughan@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

What: As part of the new SSSD strategic planning process described in Recommendation 1.1, the School Board's planning will be informed by and responsive to the implementation of school strategic plans. During fall 2026, the board will prioritize clear, quantifiable performance targets for student learning. The board and superintendent will also review and integrate the eight elements outlined in the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget Guide to Strategic Planning.

How: The School Board and superintendent will either review the 8 elements of strategic planning a few at a time during board meetings or schedule a work session that includes professional learning on the eight elements of strategic planning. Board members will provide input on each element and its relationship to the district plan. The board will then collaborate with schools, the district office, and the superintendent to draft a board strategic plan that responds to school strategic plans and student-performance data. The board will gather and consider stakeholder feedback before acting on the final draft.

The Board will evaluate the impact of their implementation of this recommendation yearly.

Documentation:

Copies of the SSSD School Board Strategic Plan

Timetable: See attached Integrated Response Timeline

Note: The SSSD School Board Strategic Plan is a living document that the board will use to evaluate the performance of SSSD School District and Superintendent. The plan will be evaluated against student performance data to determine whether adjustments are needed.

Recommendation 1.3 Structure

South Summit School Board should formally adopt a superintendent evaluation system that includes clear success measures tied to the board's strategic plan and student learning. This evaluation should happen at least annually and ensure the superintendent is given feedback on areas where they need to improve to fulfill the board's vision.

District Response: Board leadership tentatively agrees, subject to a vote by the full board following the Office of the Legislative Auditor General's presentation of the SSSD Systemic Performance Audit at its October meeting.

Contacts: Matt Weller, Board President, matt.weller@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301 ext. 4123

Greg Maughan, EdD, Superintendent, greg.maughan@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

What: The SSSD School Board will formally adopt a superintendent evaluation process designed specifically for SSSD. The process will include clear measures of success tied to the board's strategic plan and student learning, establish clear goals for the superintendent, and provide a regular cadence of feedback and evaluation throughout the year.

How: As an extension of the School Board's strategic planning process described in Recommendation 1.2, the board will develop a framework for superintendent evaluation that aligns directly with the strategic plan. The framework will be sufficiently specific to establish a consistent evaluation process while retaining the flexibility needed to respond to student-performance data, system-growth data, and progress toward the board's clear, quantifiable performance targets.

The school board will consider the research and examples outlined in section 1.3 of the Best Practices Handbook for Student Achievement in Public Education from the Office of the Legislative Auditor General when outlining the superintendent evaluation process.

The basic framework for the superintendent evaluation process will include:

The superintendent and board will agree upon the following:

- The superintendent's core responsibilities
- District strategic priorities
- Specific annual goals and indicators designed to advance the board's strategic plan
- Evidence used to evaluate performance
- Procedures for reviewing progress

- Criteria for determining whether performance meets, exceeds, or falls below expectations
- Timelines for completing each stage of the evaluation process

This framework aligns with the best practice of limiting superintendent evaluation to a small number of specific, predetermined goals.

Because the SSSD School Board Strategic Plan will not be finalized until June 2027, as described in Recommendation 1.2, the School Board and superintendent will collaborate on a draft superintendent evaluation framework to pilot during the second half of the 202026-27 school year.

The Board will evaluate the impact of their implementation of this recommendation yearly.

Documentation:

Agendas and notes from the meetings where the superintendent evaluation process is discussed and designed.

A copy of the superintendent evaluation process framework.

Timetable: See attached Integrated Response Timeline

Chapter 2

Recommendation 2.1 Structure

South Summit School District Central Office should refine its educator evaluation system to better identify top-performing teachers and elevate effective instructional practices to improve student learning outcomes. The system should also better identify teachers who need remediation and provide the needed support.

District Response: The district concurs.

Contacts: Lucinda Josie, Director of Human Resources, ljosie@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

Shelley Halverson, Director of Teaching and Learning, shelley.halverson@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

Greg Maughan, EdD, Superintendent, greg.maughan@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

What: SSSD will evaluate and refine its educator evaluation system through the joint committee process outlined in Utah Code Section 53G-11-506. SSSD will also compare its current educator evaluation platform, Observertab, with other platforms and with the needs of SSSD administrators, instructional coaches, and teachers. The review will focus on improving efficiency throughout the evaluation process and supporting meaningful participation by all users.

How: The Human Resources Department will oversee and facilitate this process. The department will first establish a joint committee composed of equal numbers of classroom teachers, parents, and administrators appointed by the SSSD School Board. The committee will adopt a meeting schedule and target dates for completing its evaluation and refinement of the educator evaluation system. In determining instructional effectiveness based on observed pedagogy (how a teacher teaches) and quantifiable measures of student learning, the committee will consider:

The relationship between observed pedagogy and quantifiable measures of student learning

- Feedback provided in Chapter 2 of the SSSD Systemic Performance Audit
- The current alignment of the SSSD Educator Evaluation System with Utah law and State Board rule
- Methods for incorporating formative and summative measures of student learning into the educator evaluation system to help identify effective instruction
- Methods for distinguishing high-leverage, instruction-focused Utah Effective Teaching Standards from nonacademic standards that, while important and necessary, do not have the same direct impact on student learning
    - Methods for evaluating a teacher's participation in and use of the PLC process to make instructional improvements that lead to student academic growth, as described in Recommendation 3.4
- The appropriate weighting of educator evaluation components in a summative evaluation

- Refinements to the SSSD Summative Effective Educator Rubric and the decision-making criteria used to determine educator effectiveness
- The clarity, validity, and reliability of evaluation tools created or streamlined in response to Recommendation 2.2
- Methods for elevating effective instructional practices that result in robust student growth
- Guidance for determining the support an educator will receive, and the area in which support is needed, when the educator's instruction requires improvement
- The clarity and alignment of goal-setting guidance created in response to Recommendation 2.3
- The cycle and cadence of formative and summative educator evaluation in SSSD
- Alignment among the SSSD Educator Evaluation System, board, district, and school strategic plans, and the SSSD Guaranteed Strategies and Intentional Practices (GSIP) instructional framework

The district will establish an ongoing monitoring process to assess the consistency and effectiveness of educator evaluation system implementation.

Documentation:

Agendas and notes for joint committee meetings.

All artifacts created or refined by the committee

Feedback on the evaluation system from the committee, administrators, instructional coaches, and teachers.

Copies of the SSSD Educator Evaluation System and all accompanying tools.

Timetable: See attached Integrated Response Timeline

Recommendation 2.2 Structure

South Summit School District Office should work with principals to improve the quality of classroom instruction by simplifying its evaluation tools to focus on clear measures of student learning. The new evaluation system should provide more effective feedback to teachers and help principals and teachers understand quality of instruction based on student learning data.

District Response: The district concurs.

Contacts: Lucinda Josie, Director of Human Resources, ljosie@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

Shelley Halverson, Director of Teaching and Learning, shelley.halverson@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

Greg Maughan, EdD, Superintendent, greg.maughan@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

What: The Human Resources Department, Teaching and Learning Department, and superintendent will collaborate with school administrators to simplify educator evaluation tools. The tools will support meaningful instructional improvement through

robust observation and feedback cycles that are specific and timely and through the review of clear, quantifiable measures of student learning. The district will also reduce unnecessary administrative tasks that can lead to compliance-based implementation. Educator evaluation tools include observation forms, formative and summative rubrics, the online educator evaluation platform, and decision-making criteria used to determine educator effectiveness. Work completed in response to Recommendation 2.2 will support and inform the joint committee's work on Recommendation 2.1.

How:

The district will refine each educator evaluation tool through a recurring cycle. Administrators will first provide input on user needs, the intended use of the tool, its validity and reliability, the information it should communicate to teachers, and the ways administrators and teachers will engage with it. The district will then provide format options for principal review and feedback and will pilot tools with willing educators. This cycle will continue until each tool is fully refined.

The district will vet all educator evaluation tools for alignment with Utah law, State Board rule, the Utah Effective Teaching Standards, SSSD strategic plans, and the GSIP framework. All tools will be submitted to the joint committee for review.

Online Evaluation Platform: The district will evaluate Observertab and comparable educator evaluation platforms to identify the solution that best meets SSSD's needs. The review will incorporate feedback from administrators, instructional coaches, and teachers regarding usability, current strengths and limitations, desired functionality, and reporting and data-analysis capabilities. The district will pay particular attention to each platform's customization capacity, including the ability to add or modify evaluation criteria, observation tools, workflows, reports, and data fields as district needs and priorities evolve. When feasible, the district will conduct demonstrations or trial implementations to assess ease of use, effectiveness, and overall user experience before selecting a platform.

Documentation:

Copies of materials used by participants to evaluate or provide feedback on the online educator evaluation platform.

Final copies of all updated tools, and any guidance provided for their use.

Agendas and minutes from joint committee meetings during which evaluation tools are discussed or recommended for use.

Timetable: See attached Integrated Response Timeline

Recommendation 2.3 Process

South Summit School District Principals should evaluate teacher goals to ensure they connect to student achievement, address instructional deficiencies, and can be measured. Once set, principals should support and hold teachers accountable as they seek to reach their goals to improve student learning.

District Response: The district concurs.

Contacts: Shelley Halverson, Director of Teaching and Learning, shelley.halverson@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

Greg Maughan, EdD, Superintendent, greg.maughan@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

School-based administrators

What: SSSD is piloting a goal-setting process that guides teachers in establishing professional growth goals directly aligned with the Student Learning Problem and Instructional Action in each school's 90-day plan. The process is designed to address the concerns identified in the SSSD Systemic Performance Audit regarding goal quality and alignment with instructional changes needed to improve student achievement. Teachers will establish two consecutive 90-day goals. Strategic plan data-collection requirements will provide evidence of progress toward each goal, and that evidence will inform the second 90-day goal.

How:

A goal template and accompanying guidance are under development. Using those resources, teachers will establish goals during a faculty-wide professional learning session at each school on October 23, 2026.

Twice between when goals are set and the end of the first 90 days, principals will present evidence of teacher progress toward goals in a data check-in meeting with the superintendent, including how teachers have been supported and any accountability measures taken. The superintendent will coach administrators as needed.

The district will evaluate the goal-setting pilot in spring 2027 to determine whether it has addressed the concerns identified in the audit, improved instruction, and, most importantly, increased student achievement. The district will refine the process based on that evaluation and teacher feedback. The process will be vetted for alignment with Utah law, State Board rule, the Utah Effective Teaching Standards, SSSD strategic plans, and the GSIP framework and then submitted to the joint committee for review.

Documentation:

The final goal-setting template, guidance for completing it, and any professional learning provided to teachers.

A summary of themes related to the support and accountability measures provided to teachers by school principals.

The district will establish an ongoing monitoring process to assess the consistency and effectiveness of goal-setting implementation.

Summary documents related to the evaluation of the goal-setting pilot, its effectiveness, and any adjustments made to increase effectiveness in the future.

Agendas and minutes from joint committee meetings during which the goal-setting process is discussed or recommended for use.

Timetable: See attached Integrated Response Timeline

Recommendation 2.4 Governance

The legislature should consider an audit on teacher evaluation systems focused on the role of student data in evaluations, whether potential limitations exist within ***Utah Code*** and/or *Administrative Rule*, and an overall assessment on how the evaluation system could be improved to drive teacher and student performance.

District Response: The district concurs.

Contacts: Greg Maughan, EdD, Superintendent, greg.maughan@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

Shelley Halverson, Director of Teaching and Learning, shelley.halverson@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

What: SSSD will participate in any audit the Legislature elects to conduct. Effective teacher evaluation focused on instructional-improvement cycles and meaningful teacher growth has the potential to be a high-leverage practice for improving student outcomes across the state.

Chapter 3

Recommendation 3.1 Structure

South Summit School District should administer universal screeners in all schools throughout the year to gather data on student learning needs early and create intervention groups based on those identified learning needs.

District Response: The district concurs.

Contacts: Shelley Halverson, Director of Teaching and Learning, shelley.halverson@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

Greg Maughan, EdD, Superintendent, greg.maughan@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

What: The Teaching and Learning Department and superintendent, in collaboration with school administrators, will ensure that each school has access to universal screeners and consistently administers and interprets them throughout the year. Screening data will be used to identify student learning needs early and to create intervention groups based on those needs. The SSSD screening process will align with evidence-based practices for selecting and administering screeners and interpreting the resulting data.

How: SSSD will develop guidance on evidence-based universal screening practices, including vetting and selecting screeners, consistently interpreting screening data to identify individual learning needs, and planning interventions to address those needs.

The district will create an inventory of all assessments, screeners, and diagnostic measures used in each school. The inventory will include clear guidance regarding the purpose of each measure and its intended use.

The Teaching and Learning Department, in collaboration with each school, will use best-practice guidance, the assessment inventory, an evaluation rubric, and student data to evaluate the screeners used at each school, the consistency of data interpretation, and the quality of resulting interventions. The results of the evaluation will identify concerns to be addressed and the support required by each school. Each school will create an action plan to address identified needs or incorporate the necessary actions into its strategic plan.

The district will establish an ongoing monitoring process to assess the consistency and effectiveness of universal screening implementation.

Documentation:

The Assessment Inventory for each school.

The best practice guidance document and any rubrics developed.

The results of each school's evaluation and the resulting action plan.

Timetable: See attached Integrated Response Timeline

Recommendation 3.2 Structure

South Summit School District should adopt best practices that allow for small-group and individualized interventions throughout all schools and grades to remediate student learning gaps and improve student skills. These interventions should be research-based

and focused on gaps in students' learning as evidenced by data related to mastery of standards.

District Response: The district concurs.

Contacts: Greg Maughan, EdD, Superintendent, greg.maughan@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

Shelley Halverson, Director of Teaching and Learning, shelley.halverson@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

School administrators

What: SSSD will adopt best practices for interventions designed to remediate student learning gaps and improve student skills. These practices will address the appropriate use of data to diagnose student learning needs, the selection of research-based interventions, and progress monitoring to determine intervention effectiveness.

How: In conjunction with the universal screening guidance developed in response to Recommendation 3.1, SSSD will create guidance, parameters, and a rubric describing best practices for student intervention. Schools will use the rubric to evaluate current practices and identify areas for growth. The evaluation will include an examination of existing structures, including the use of intervention time for work completion rather than remediation of identified learning needs, that may impede the delivery of high-quality interventions.

The Teaching and Learning Department and superintendent will provide professional learning to administrators on these best practices and collaborate with them as they evaluate their school intervention systems. Using the rubric and evidence supporting each rating, schools will identify and prioritize areas for growth and either create action plans or incorporate the necessary actions into their strategic plans. This work will be coordinated with the action plans developed in response to Recommendation 3.1.

The district will establish an ongoing monitoring process to assess the consistency and effectiveness of school intervention system implementation.

Documentation:

Guidance, parameters, and rubric documents created around best practices for student intervention.

Professional learning documents or slide decks created to support administrators.

School evaluation summaries of their intervention systems and copies of school strategic plans or action plans with intervention system improvements outlined.

Timetable: See attached Integrated Response Timeline

Recommendation 3.3 Structure

South Summit School District should develop a system that regularly identifies students in need of support and use that system to track interventions to ensure students are progressing. School leaders should be trained in these resources to allow school teams throughout the district to routinely use data to identify student needs and develop appropriate plans to intervene in improving student learning outcomes.

District Response: The district concurs.

Contacts: Shelley Halverson, Director of Teaching and Learning, shelley.halverson@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

Greg Maughan, EdD, Superintendent, greg.maughan@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

What: SSSD will evaluate the capacity of its current systems to regularly identify students who need support and to track interventions and student progress. The district will emphasize efficiency in both student identification and progress tracking. Once the appropriate systems are selected, school leaders will receive training on their use and on incorporating consistent system use into school leadership, MTSS, and other student-support meetings. In partnership with the actions described in Recommendation 3.1, this work will create a safety net that connects students with timely interventions and helps prevent them from falling further behind.

Administrators at each school will establish intervention criteria for academics, social-emotional needs, and behavior and will use Performance Matters or another selected platform to monitor student progress.

How:

The district will evaluate the capacity and efficiency of Performance Matters, Student Analytics, and Panorama for identifying student needs and tracking interventions and progress. If necessary, the district will investigate other platforms that more fully meet district needs.

School leaders and their designees will receive training on using the selected platforms and leveraging them in meetings focused on identifying student needs. School administrators will establish intervention criteria for academics, social-emotional needs, and behavior. These criteria will align with the guidance developed in response to Recommendations 3.1 and 3.2.

School leaders will use these platforms to determine whether students are progressing, the rate of that progress, and the quality of the Tier 1 instruction and interventions students receive. This use of data will support the data-based decision-making process required by the SSSD school strategic planning process.

The district will establish an ongoing monitoring process to assess the consistency of platform use and data-based decision-making. Effectiveness will be measured by each school's ability to use the platform to demonstrate student progress.

Documentation:

Documents created and used to evaluate Performance Matters, Student Analytics, and Panorama

Training materials used to support effective use of these platforms and the data within them to support the identification of student needs, intervention tracking, and student progress.

Aggregate student data progress reports that demonstrate student progress.

Timetable: See attached Integrated Response Timeline

Recommendation 3.4 Leadership

South Summit School District should ensure principals are effectively evaluating teacher collaboration meetings throughout the district. Principals, in turn, should ensure that

best practices for teacher collaboration are being used, including regular use of student data, discussions of instructional strategy to improve student learning. Teacher collaboration time should be focused on student learning and not used for administrative purposes.

District Response: The district concurs.

Contacts: Greg Maughan, EdD, Superintendent, greg.maughan@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

Shelley Halverson, Director of Teaching and Learning, shelley.halverson@ssummit.org, (435) 783-4301

School administrators

What: SSSD leadership will establish clear expectations for collaboration, including the use of student data, evaluation of instructional practices, and prioritization of discussions about student learning. School administrators will routinely evaluate the quality of teacher collaboration and identify ways to strengthen the PLC process so schools can more effectively identify and support students in need. The work described in this recommendation will inform the joint committee identified in Recommendation 2.1 as it determines how teachers' effective participation in and use of the PLC process should be reflected in the educator evaluation system.

How:

During the school strategic planning process, multiple schools identified the need to restructure and reevaluate their PLC processes. They are implementing new structures during the first cycle of 90-day plan implementation. School administrators will use the same tool used by the legislative auditors to gather baseline data on the operation and effectiveness of current PLC structures.

The Teaching and Learning Department, superintendent, and school administrators will co-create expectations for collaboration, including the use of student data, evaluation of instructional practices, and prioritization of discussions about student learning. The district will compare those expectations with the baseline data. The comparison will identify next steps for PLC evaluation, needed improvements to PLC processes, and evaluation of individual teachers' effectiveness within the PLC process. This work may include additional rubrics and targeted guidance. The district will also use student-learning data to evaluate the effectiveness of each school's PLC structure. Schools will incorporate necessary PLC improvements into their strategic plans.

Guidance for evaluating a teacher's participation in and use of the PLC process to make instructional improvements that lead to student academic growth will be presented to the joint committee for review and possible inclusion in the refined SSSD Educator Evaluation System recommended to the board.

The district will establish an ongoing monitoring process to assess consistent implementation of PLC expectations and the impact of each school's PLC process on student outcomes.

Documentation:

Summaries of PLC baseline data for each school.

PLC expectation documents and all created guidance and evaluation materials.

Copies of school strategic plans or action plans with PLC improvements outlined.
Results related to the district monitoring system.

Timetable: See attached Integrated Response Timeline

INTEGRATED RESPONSE TIMELINE

Audit Response — Chapters 1–3

Two to three district leaders will oversee, develop, coordinate, and monitor the work. The sequence therefore limits the team to one major development priority and one implementation or monitoring priority at a time. This ensures district capacity for meaningful and sustainable change.

Timeframe	Chapter / Recommendation	Primary action or deliverable	Workload consideration
Oct-26	**Chapter 1 — Rec. 1.1**	Present draft student-performance targets, the proposed board data-review schedule, and resource-alignment documentation to the board.	Complete the most immediate governance commitment first.
Oct-26	**Chapter 2 — Rec. 2.3**	Finalize the teacher goal-setting template and guidance and conduct school goal-setting sessions on October 23.	Use one districtwide template and common training materials.
October–November 2026	**Chapter 3 — Rec. 3.4**	School administrators begin collecting baseline information about PLC practices through the first 90-day planning cycle.	Use existing PLC and 90-day plan structures.
Nov-26	**Chapter 1 — Rec. 1.1**	Revise and finalize performance targets, the board data-review schedule, and resource-alignment requirements.	Create the performance framework needed for later work.
November–December 2026	**Chapter 2 — Rec. 2.3**	Principals report teacher goal progress, support provided, and accountability actions during superintendent data check-ins.	Incorporate this into existing superintendent-principal meetings.
Dec-26	**Chapter 1 — Rec. 1.2**	Conduct the board professional learning work session on the eight elements of strategic planning.	Use one concentrated work session.
Dec-26	**Chapter 2 — Rec. 2.1**	The board appoints the educator evaluation joint committee.	Appoint now; delay intensive committee work until draft materials exist.
Jan-27	**Chapter 2 — Rec. 2.3**	Teachers review first-cycle evidence and establish the second 90-day goal on January 15.	Reuse the first-cycle format and evidence expectations.
Jan-27	**Chapter 2 — Rec. 2.1**	The joint committee holds an organizational meeting and adopts its scope, schedule, and target dates.	Limit the initial meeting to organization and orientation.
January–February 2027	**Chapter 3 — Rec. 3.4**	District and school leaders review PLC baseline information and identify common strengths and concerns.	Combine this with reviews of school 90-day plans.
Feb-27	**Chapter 3 — Rec. 3.4**	Establish common district expectations for effective PLC collaboration.	Co-create one districtwide framework.
Mar-27	**Chapter 1 — Rec. 1.3**	The board and superintendent agree on a draft superintendent evaluation framework.	Build directly from the emerging strategic plan.
Mar-27	**Chapter 3 — Rec. 3.4**	Schools compare PLC baseline information with district expectations and identify priority improvements.	Place improvements in the next 90-day plans.
March–June 2027	**Chapter 1 — Rec. 1.3**	Pilot the superintendent evaluation framework and gather board and superintendent feedback.	Limit the pilot to a small number of agreed-upon goals.
March–June 2027	**Chapter 2 — Rec. 2.3**	Evaluate and refine the teacher goal-setting pilot using teacher, principal, and student-performance evidence.	Use existing feedback and meeting structures.
March–May 2027	**Chapter 1 — Rec. 1.2**	Review draft strategic plan components during regular board meetings and work sessions.	Address only one or two components per meeting.
March–May 2027	**Chapter 2 — Rec. 2.2**	Define requirements and conduct an initial review of Observertab and comparable evaluation platforms.	Focus on requirements and demonstrations before procurement.
May-27	Chapter 1 — Rec. 1.2	Complete a strategic plan draft for stakeholder feedback.	Finish this draft before launching another major development project.
May-27	**Chapter 2 — Rec. 2.2**	Determine whether a platform change is needed and identify budgeting or procurement requirements.	Defer a change if no option clearly meets district needs.
June–July 2027	**Chapter 1 — Rec. 1.3**	Revise the superintendent evaluation framework based on the pilot and adopted strategic plan.	Use the final plan to establish evaluation measures.
Jun-27	**Chapter 1 — Rec. 1.2**	The board considers feedback and adopts the final strategic plan.	This completes the major Chapter 1 development work.
July–September 2027	**Chapter 3 — Rec. 3.1**	Develop universal screening guidance and complete the district assessment inventory.	Develop screening and intervention materials together.
July–September 2027	**Chapter 3 — Rec. 3.2**	Develop intervention guidance, parameters, and a school self-evaluation rubric.	Use the same team and evidence base as Rec. 3.1.

August–October 2027	**Chapter 2 — Rec. 2.2**	Refine observation forms, rubrics, decision criteria, and related educator evaluation tools.	Complete one tool-development cycle at a time.
Sep-27	**Chapter 2 — Rec. 2.3**	Present the refined goal-setting process to the joint committee.	Give the committee a completed component to review.
September–October 2027	**Chapter 3 — Rec. 3.3**	Define requirements for student identification, intervention recording, and progress monitoring.	Use Recs. 3.1 and 3.2 to define technology requirements.
Oct-27	**Chapter 3 — Recs. 3.1 & 3.2**	Provide combined administrator learning on screening, intervention, and school self-evaluation.	Conduct one integrated professional learning session.
October–November 2027	**Chapter 3 — Rec. 3.3**	Evaluate Performance Matters, Student Analytics, Panorama, and other platforms against the requirements.	Coordinate with the Chapter 2 platform review.
Nov-27	**Chapter 2 — Recs. 2.1 & 2.2**	The joint committee reviews refined educator evaluation tools and recommends revisions.	Bundle materials into one organized review cycle.
Nov-27	**Chapter 3 — Rec. 3.4**	Present guidance for evaluating teacher participation in PLCs to the joint committee.	Align with the committee review of other evaluation tools.
November 2027–January 2028	**Chapter 3 — Recs. 3.1 & 3.2**	Schools evaluate current screening and intervention systems using district rubrics.	Conduct one coordinated school review.
Dec-27	**Chapter 3 — Rec. 3.3**	Determine whether current platforms meet district needs and establish consistent intervention criteria.	Decide the process before extensive platform configuration.
Jan-28	**Chapter 2 — Rec. 2.1**	Present the refined SSSD Educator Evaluation System to the board for authorization to pilot.	Make this the primary system-development milestone.
January–May 2028	**Chapter 2 — Rec. 2.1**	Pilot the refined educator evaluation system and collect administrator and educator feedback.	Keep the pilot focused on essential tools and processes.
Feb-28	**Chapter 3 — Recs. 3.1 & 3.2**	Schools identify priority improvements and incorporate them into strategic or coordinated action plans.	Require one combined screening and intervention plan.
February–April 2028	**Chapter 3 — Rec. 3.3**	Configure the selected student-identification and intervention-tracking system and develop guidance.	Wait until the educator evaluation pilot is stable before expansion.
March–May 2028	**Chapter 3 — Recs. 3.1 & 3.2**	Schools begin implementing priority screening and intervention improvements.	Begin with a limited number of priorities per school.
April–May 2028	**Chapter 3 — Rec. 3.3**	Train a small group of leaders and staff and conduct a limited platform pilot.	Use a small pilot rather than districtwide implementation.
Jun-28	**Chapter 2 — Rec. 2.1**	Evaluate the educator evaluation pilot, complete revisions, and present the final system to the board.	Finish this system before expanding other implementation work.
Jun-28	**Chapter 3 — Recs. 3.1–3.4**	Review screening, intervention, tracking, and PLC implementation and identify refinements.	Use one coordinated annual monitoring review.
2028–29 school year	**Chapter 1 — Recs. 1.1–1.3**	Fully implement board data review, strategic plan monitoring, and superintendent evaluation.	Manage these as one aligned governance cycle.
2028–29 school year	**Chapter 2 — Recs. 2.1–2.3**	Fully implement educator evaluation, related tools and platform, and teacher goal-setting.	Provide support before adding new evaluation requirements.
2028–29 school year	**Chapter 3 — Recs. 3.1–3.4**	Expand screening, intervention, student tracking, and PLC expectations across all schools.	Use strategic plans and 90-day plans as the implementation vehicles.
Jun-29	**Chapters 1–3**	Complete the first comprehensive review of implementation, effectiveness, and student outcomes.	Use one districtwide review instead of separate reports.
As requested	**Chapter 2 — Rec. 2.4**	Participate in any statewide review or audit of educator evaluation systems.	Treat as contingent work without a separate local project.





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