

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)  
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

**UTAH**

*This profile was verified by the Staff of the Utah Department of Education in June of 2000.  
All information is current as of that date.*

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**State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)**

1. *Provide a brief overview and history of the assessment system as the context.*

Utah's major student assessment programs, which make up the accountability system for the state, include two testing programs that affect significant numbers of students in the state:

- the Statewide Testing Program (Stanford Achievement Test) and
- the Core Assessment Program.

These two testing programs each have different purposes and yield different information about students' performance throughout the state.

The legislature passed House Bill 33 in March 1999 which requires an expanded mandatory "basic-skills" testing program for Utah students. The measure calls for a statewide achievement test in grades 3, 5, 8 and 11 that would compare their performance with that of a national sample, as well as a criterion referenced test in all grades in the basic skills. A basic skills test will also be administered in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, which students will be required to pass in order to graduate. This assessment, however, has not yet been developed or implemented. The tests will be implemented by the 2002-03 school year.

2. *What are the characteristics of the state assessment system, including:*

- *Name of Assessment Instrument(s) or Program(s):*

**Utah Performance Assessment System for Students (U-PASS)**

- *Grade Levels and Subjects Tested*

The **Stanford 9** is used to measure the following areas in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11:

- reading,
- mathematics,
- language,
- science, and
- social studies.

Reading and mathematics are further broken out by specific scores such as reading comprehension and mathematics computation.

The **Core Assessment Program** uses state-developed criterion-referenced tests, performance assessments, and portfolios with students in all grades to test:

- English/Language Arts and
- Mathematics.

All districts have been mandated through House Bill 33 to test all grades in these subjects for 1999-2000 school year. The subject areas will be expanded over time, and the state has until the 2004-05 school year to be in full implementation of a criterion-referenced system.

- *Norm or Criterion Referenced*

**Stanford 9:** norm referenced; **Core Assessment Program:** criterion referenced.

- *Matrix or Census Testing:* Census

- *Item Types (including proportions if available via Internet or interview)  
such as: traditional or enhanced multiple choice, performance tasks, open-ended questions, portfolios, essays, etc.*

**SAT9** is multiple choice while the **Core Assessments** include tests, performance assessments, and portfolios. State Core Assessment products include criterion-referenced tests, performance assessments, an analytic writing assessment model, and test item pools.

The four components of the **Core Assessment Program** include:

- criterion-referenced tests and item pools,
- writing assessment,
- performance assessment modules, and
- portfolio assessments.

- *Time of Testing (specific month(s) or testing window)*

**SAT9:** fall

**Core Assessment Program:** last three weeks of the school year

- *High School Exit Exam (date of implementation and/or phase-in timeline)*

Although no high school exit exam is in place for 1999-2000, House Bill 33 requires the development and administration of a 10<sup>th</sup> grade high school basic skills competency test that students will be required to pass in order to receive a diploma; students not passing will graduate with a certificate of completion. This, as a portion of the new assessment system, is scheduled to be fully implemented by the 2004-05 school year.

- *Other Assessments*

**Utah Pre-Kindergarten Assessment:** The Kindergarten assessment is individually administered. The purpose of the assessment is to help teachers begin to identify the literacy and numeric skills each child has acquired before entering kindergarten, so that teachers can:

- inform parents and other family members of things they can do to encourage development of good reading skills;
- plan instruction to meet the needs of the individuals and of the class; and
- individualize instruction to ensure that all students acquire the skills needed to move on to first grade.

The Pre-K assessment is not meant to be used as a screening instrument nor as a reason for excluding a child from kindergarten. Teachers should use the above information on an individual and a group basis to start planning instruction to meet the specific needs of their students.

- *Transitional or Final Assessment System - Transitional*

3. *Who designed and produced the assessment(s) used by the state? If a commercial test was used by the state, were modifications or additions made to the assessment to address state requirements or standards? If so, what did they include?*

The **SAT9** has not been altered for Utah by the state or by Harcourt-Brace; it is given as designed by the company, strictly as a norm-referenced examination. The **Core Assessment Program** tests have been developed by in-state developers of assessments, primarily based through the local universities. These professionals have worked under contract with the state assessment steering committee to help design and craft the assessments based on the test items submitted by teachers and others in the educational community from across the state. However, the secondary language arts assessment that is currently being designed is under contract with **Advanced Systems**, and the development process is different from the past due to increased funds for test development.

4. *What are the state requirements for local assessment, including the types of assessments and their use in areas such as reporting and accountability, as well as Title I adequate yearly progress? What grade levels and subjects are tested?*

No local requirements exist apart from the administration of the state assessments.

5. *Is the state assessment system aligned with the state standards? Are there plans for alignment, and if so, how will the assessment and standards become aligned? Probe on:*
  - *Refining standards*
  - *Revamping assessments*

- *Adding components to assessments*

*What is the timeline for completion of the alignment?*

The Core Assessment has been designed to measure progress in achieving state standards and deemed to be aligned with those standards. However, these assessment will be altered in the coming years but are still intended to measure the achievement on state standards. Those new assessments will be in place in 2004-05.

6. *What is the state's approach for ensuring alignment and what evidence of that alignment is provided?*

The state testing system has undergone an independent review by WestEd of the assessments and the curriculum, and have made some changes to the previous tests used in the Core Assessment program. The review also included a matching process between the assessments and the standards, and they were found to be in alignment. The state has also developed Core Curriculum-Test Correlation matrixes in grades one through six.

7. *How is the data included in the state assessment system used?*

The primary purpose of this program is to provide specific information to students, parents, teachers, and administrators about the extent to which students have mastered the state Core Curriculum. However, districts are under mandate to assess student performance based on the Core Curriculum. The criterion-referenced testing program yields individual student reports as well as group data. The performance assessment and portfolio programs are used primarily at the classroom level--no group data are available. The collections of test items or test item pools are intended as resources for teachers and schools in accomplishing more informal, day-to-day, or unit-oriented student assessment.

The Statewide Testing Program, the Utah Educational Quality Indicators effort, and the State-by-State National Assessment are all programs which focus on assessing the quality of the total system in providing relevant information to the public and policymakers on levels of academic achievement.

8. *Are there changes planned for the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

**House Bill 177** was passed by the legislature in March 2000 and will require the expansion of assessment and accountabilities policies in the state after the 1999-2000 school year. In addition to the requirements outlined in House Bill 33 from 1999, this new law requires for the state to make assessment results available to schools and districts by the end of the school year, so the Core Assessment Program testing window will be pushed up in the school year, moving it from the last three weeks of the year as it is for 1999-2000. To comply with these new regulations, the Core Assessments will be completely changed in time to be fully implemented and expanded to subject areas such as science by the 2004-05 school year. A 10<sup>th</sup> grade high school competency exam and a direct writing assessment for grades six and

nine are also to be developed by the state. House Bill 177 also indicates that *student behavior indicators* will be used in assessing student performance.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of state assessment? Explain.*

The transitions required by the state legislation in response to federal mandates have been and will continue to be the greatest challenges for the state assessment system.

## **Inclusion Policies for Assessment**

1. *What exclusions are made in the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP? Who makes the decision about exclusion of a particular child? Does the state collect data or in other ways monitor the number and types of students excluded? Does that vary by test?*

It is the intent of the program to test virtually all students. Specific criteria for excluding students who cannot participate meaningfully in the testing are provided to teachers and administrators. Basically, students who would be excluded would be those with very limited English proficiency or students who have an IEP and are judged by the IEP team or equivalent group as incapable of participating meaningfully in the testing. Specific forms are provided to document reasons for excluding any student from the testing. Students who qualify for exemption from testing should not be given the Stanford Achievement Test.

For the **Statewide Testing Program**, districts are required to abide by specified exemption criteria for including or exempting students in order for test results to be valid. The SDE strongly encourage teachers and administrators to consider these criteria very carefully when deciding whether to test a particular student. If, after careful consideration, there is any doubt as to whether a student should be tested, include him/her. If, however, the student clearly qualifies for exemption, he/she should not be tested, since the criteria specify that, for students who qualify for exemption, the testing process will either be harmful to the student or will yield no usable information about the student's learning or capabilities.

### **Criteria for Exempting Students from the Statewide Testing Program (1997-98)**

Any student who is capable of participating meaningfully in the testing program should be included in the test administration procedure. Some of the students in your school may be formally classified as having Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or may be functioning under an Individual Education Plan (IEP). It is possible that some fraction of these students may be incapable of participating meaningfully in the testing program without an accommodation that would violate the standardization requirements of the test (e.g., time limits, group administration). Following are criteria for exemption of students from testing:

1. A student who is identified as LEP should be included in the Statewide Testing Program unless:
  - the student has received less than three years (including the current school year) of instruction, primarily in English, AND
  - the student cannot demonstrate his or her knowledge in English.

2. A student with an IEP or equivalent classification should be included in the Statewide Testing Program unless:

- the IEP team or equivalent group has determined that the student cannot participate in assessments such as the Stanford Achievement Test, OR
- the student's cognitive functioning is so severely impaired that she/he cannot participate, OR
- the student's IEP requires that the student be tested with an accommodation, and the student cannot demonstrate his/her knowledge without that accommodation.

3. The school principal in consultation with staff has determined that, due to an extremely unusual circumstance (e.g., a personal tragedy, a family crisis), a specific student is incapable of participating meaningfully in the testing program. When there is doubt, include the student in the testing program. If the student qualifies for exemption, do not test.

For all **Core Assessment Programs**, it is recommended that districts adopt a policy of full inclusion and accommodation. Because these tests are direct measures of the student's mastery of the Core Curriculum, and because the interpretation of the scores is not so directly tied to the maintenance of strict standardization conditions in the testing process, this is the most appropriate testing program to use for all students, including students with special needs.

It is further recommended that districts adopt a policy specifying conditions under which students qualify for accommodation in testing, and what an appropriate accommodation might be for specific learning needs. For instance, the criteria for exemption used in the Statewide Testing Program might be used as the basis for identifying students who qualify for accommodation. That is, students who meet the exemption criteria for the Stanford Achievement Test are those students who require an accommodation in Core Assessment. The majority of students should be tested under standard testing conditions as specified in the Directions for Administration.

2. *What accommodations and/or modifications are made on the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP?*

Students may be accommodated in a variety of ways during the **Core Assessment Programs**, such as:

- Reading items to students who have a disability in reading (except reading test).
- Providing an alternate means of response for students who cannot use the conventional answer sheet.
- Using Braille or large print versions of the test.
- Providing a translation of items for students who are not functional in English.
- Allowing students to use learning aids that are not used in the standard administration of the test (e.g., math manipulatives).

3. *Does the state provide assessments in languages other than English? If so, describe. In what grades and subjects?*

Only the pre-kindergarten assessment program offers a Spanish version.

4. *Does the state provide alternative assessments for students with disabilities? If so, describe. For which students and in which subjects and at what ages?*

The state is in the process of developing alternative assessments but have not done so at this time for the 1999-2000 school year.

5. *Does the state have a goal for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or LEP students on the statewide tests? Does the state use any strategies to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities? LEP students?*

The state's assessment program is meant to test virtually all students. Only those with very limited proficiency in English and special education students with exemptions outlined in the IEPs are not to be included.

6. *Are changes planned in the for the inclusion of SWD and LEP students in the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

Although revisions are planned for inclusion, specifics have not been developed and do not impact the 1999-2000 school year.

## **Performance Standards**

1. *How many and what performance levels has the state established for its assessments?*

Performance standards have not yet been developed for 1999-2000 but are in the process of development as part of the new state assessment and accountability policies. However, the NAEP proficiency levels and levels similar to the NAEP have been reported in the state in past years. Specifically, Title I schools in the state will continue this year to use the following levels to describe achievement on the core assessments in determining adequate yearly progress at the elementary level:

- Advanced
- Proficient
- Basic
- Below Basic.

The definition of these levels is under revision at this time but will be used to categorizing student performance for 1999-2000.

2. *Has the state set acceptable levels or targets for schools, districts or the state on tests, drop-out rates or other measures (e.g. 70% of students in Maryland pass the MSPAP)?*

No such targets have been developed.

3. *How are these performance standards calculated? What data are included in the calculations, and at what proportions (e.g. assessment results 60%, dropout and attendance rates 40%). How are the calculations made? What is the final unit of analysis for reporting school and district achievement levels (e.g. performance index, grade, category)?*

Unknown; performance levels have not been determined for the new assessments.

4. *Are all students, schools and districts included in these performance calculations? If not, who is excluded?*

Unknown; performance levels have not been determined.

5. *Are changes planned for the state performance standards (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

Yes, performance levels will be determined as required in state and federal regulation in connection with the new assessment system. House Bill 177 states that U-PASS “shall provide the public, the Legislature, the State Board of Education, school districts, public schools and school teachers evaluative information regarding the *various levels of proficiency* achieved by students.” It has been reported that the new levels will include:

- Mastery
- Near Mastery, and
- Partial Mastery

thereby moving away from the levels that resembled those used by NAEP.

6. *What proportion of schools and/or districts fail to meet acceptable levels on performance targets?*

Not available; performance levels have not been determined.

## **Reporting Performance Data**

1. *Describe the characteristics of the state performance data reporting system (by whom, what data, who is the audience)?*

Assessment results have been made available to school districts by mid-November. These reports were produced through the test scoring service at the State Office of Education. To strengthen these processes, House Bill 33, passed in March 1999 states that:

“norm-referenced tests results shall be reported at the state and district levels, and shall include actual levels of performance on tests; and criterion-referenced tests results shall be reported at state, district, and school levels, and shall include actual levels of performance on tests.” (53A-1-603)

- *Student reports*

Students receive their Stanford 9 test scores. Student level information is provided to parents and teachers but is not made public.

- *School reports*

School level reporting on the results of the Stanford 9 test has been mandated since 1990.

- *District reports*

**District Performance Reports** allow school districts to profile their unique characteristics and academic performance for the benefit of their public, policymakers, and staff. Utah State law requires that Utah school districts submit an annual performance report to the State Board of Education and the Legislature by January 15 of each year. Copies of the district performance reports are to be distributed to the residence of each student enrolled in every district.

In addition, the State Board of Education has directed Utah State Office of Education staff to provide models, training, and guidelines to enable all Utah school districts to prepare an annual planning and performance report and distribute it to the public, legislature, and the State Board of Education.

### **Data Elements Specified for Inclusion in District Performance Reports**

#### 1. Achievement--Trend Data

- District Norm-referenced Test Scores
- ACT Scores/Percent Taking Test
- AP Scores/Number of Students Taking Tests/Number Passing
- Criterion-referenced Test Scores

#### 2. Students

- Enrollment Trends
- Ethnic Distribution of Student Population
- Attendance Trends (ADA (If Available), ADM)
- Dropout Rates and Trends

#### 3. Fiscal Information

- Revenue By Source and Total
- Expenditures by Category and Total
- Current Expenditures Per Student and Trends (District, State, National)

#### 4. Staff

- By Level (Number and Percent)
- Level = Elementary, Junior High, Senior High, and District Office
- Pupil/Teacher Ratios and Trends
- Average Years of Experience of Professional Staff

#### 5. Curriculum- Course-taking Patterns (Trends Based on State Data)

#### 6. School Buildings

- Number of Buildings by Level
- Number of Year-round Schools

- Number of Extended Day Schools
7. Assistance to Students and Families
- Percentage of Free School Lunch Participants
  - Percentage of Students Who Receive Fee Waivers
  - Total Dollar Amount of Fee Waivers
  - Percentage of Students Whose Families Receive AFDC Funds
8. Support Services
- School Lunch
  - Student Transportation
  - Maintenance
  - Security

Each year in December, a series of special reports is produced by the state and sent to each local school district for it to share with its board of education and public. These reports feature median scores which are obtained by schools and districts, and predicted score ranges which allow a comparison between a school median and a range of scores which would be expected in schools with similar students.

- *State reports*

The Summary of Results from 1999 presents the statewide results from the 1997, 1998, and 1999 fall administrations of the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition to Utah fifth, eighth, and eleventh graders. Results are presented for all major subtests, including mathematics, reading, language, science, social science, and the complete battery. Also reported are results for the "thinking skills" subtest. This subtest is a composite of the Stanford's most challenging test items. State scores are reported as median national percentile ranks.

The data that are contained in the state report represent a baseline **for both the inclusion of students with disabilities in the testing program and their performance** on the Stanford 9. The state considers it critical that students be assessed on the skills that they have been taught. Therefore, it is expected that the numbers of students with disabilities taking the Stanford 9 will change.

The **Utah Educational Quality Indicators** are also included in the state report and offer information on student performance and attitudes from a variety of sources, including:

- the American College Testing Program,
- the Scholastic Aptitude Test,
- the Advanced Placement Program,
- the Statewide Testing Program, and
- the Census

as well as other unique sources of information available at the time of publication of each individual report.

- *Title I reports*

An Adequate Yearly Progress report is submitted by districts to the state and is used as the basis for determining whether or not adequate yearly progress has been met.

2. *How are the data distributed? When during the year (month or time period after assessment)? To whom (students, teachers, parents, the media, the community)?*

Initial results such as individual student and school profiles are made available to school districts by mid-November. These are the same kinds of reports which have typically been produced through the test scoring service at the Utah State Office of Education. It is highly recommended that the report titled "Home Profile," showing individual student results, be shared with both students and parents. In December, a series of special reports are produced and sent to each local school district to share with the local board of education and public. These reports feature actual median scores, which were obtained by schools and districts, as well as predicted score ranges which allow a comparison between a school median and a range of scores which would be expected in schools with similar students. Essentially, this same report format are included for each district and school as a section of the State Superintendent's Annual Report.

3. *At what level(s) are data disaggregated (state, district and school levels)? For what groups are disaggregated data reported (see Internet sites for state, district and school level report cards)?*

The state has been disaggregating data along the subgroups required through federal Title I legislation, but have not been reporting most of the data publicly due to the small numbers of students in each jurisdictional subgroup. The information is available to those who request it. The SAT9 achievement levels of students with disabilities have, however, been reported as a result of the IDEA legislation in 1997.

4. *Does trend data exist from the state assessments (example: Texas State Assessment data is available from "1996-97 on")?*

Although changes in the Core Assessments have eliminated the possibility of trend data on that indicator, the Stanford series of testing has been used in the state for over a decade, making 1999 the tenth year of Stanford testing in Utah.

5. *How are the results of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency reported? Are they included in the aggregate scores reported to the public, or disaggregated by group?*

The data that are contained in the state report represent a baseline **for both the inclusion of students with disabilities in the testing program and their performance** on the Stanford 9. The state considers it critical that students be assessed on the skills that they have been taught. Therefore, it is expected that the numbers of students with disabilities taking the Stanford 9 will change.

6. *What are the state's requirements for the use of data in school and district improvement planning?*

The strategic planning and accreditation processes require school improvement planning and include the use of data. In addition, House Bill 33 states that the SBE must develop a plan to analyze the results of the state testing program scores that will include a component designed to assist school districts to “use the results of the testing program in planning, evaluating and enhancing programs within the district.”

7. *Are changes planned for performance reporting (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the accountability system (Title I or in general)?*

Although the district reporting structure will remain also entirely the same, House Bill 177 will transition the state from a district to a school level reporting system and specifies the exact content of those reports using a uniform state data system. Additional information will be added to the state superintendent’s annual report as well. The State Board of Education in collaboration with the state’s 40 school districts will “develop a school performance report to inform the state’s residents of the quality of schools and the educational achievement of students in the state’s public education system.” The report shall include the following statistical data for each school in each school district, as applicable, and shall also aggregate the data at the district and state levels:

- test scores and trends over the previous four years on: norm-referenced achievement tests, criterion-referenced tests, writing assessments and tenth grade basic skills competency tests and college entrance examinations, including the number and percentage of each graduating class taking the examinations for the previous four years;
- advanced placement and concurrent enrollment data;
- the number and percent of students in elementary schools reading at or above grade level;
- the number and percent of students classified as "chronic absentees", as defined by State Board of Education rule;
- achievement gaps that reflect the differences in achievement of various student groups as defined by State Board of Education rule; and
- the number of students enrolled in special education programs for the previous four years;
- the number and percent of "student dropouts" within the district as defined by State Board of Education rule;
- course-taking patterns and trends in secondary schools;
- student mobility;
- staff qualifications, to include years of professional service and the number and percent of staff who have a degree or endorsement in their assigned teaching area;
- the number and percentage of parents who participate in SEP, SEOP, and parent-teacher conferences;
- the number and percentage of students who participate in extracurricular activities; and
- average class size by grade level and subject.

8. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of performance standards and reporting? Explain.*

Performance levels have not been determined, and reporting has not changed over the past few years. However, House Bill 177 will change the nature of reporting from the district to school level.

## **State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)**

### *1. Provide a brief overview and history of the accountability system as the context.*

In the past and during the 1999-2000 school year the two primary forms of accountability in Utah have included:

- school accreditation through the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, and
- the district accountability reporting system.

However, the legislature has formed a **Task Force on Learning Standards and Accountability** in Education, a panel of educators and policymakers that is supposed to study and report by the end of 2000 on how well the state is instituting standards and accountability programs at the district, school and classroom levels. **House Bill 177: Assessing, Reporting and Evaluating School Performance** was the result of the work of the first year of this task force. The task force will continue to meet and propose further legislation for consideration. Decisions such as the process of identifying and assisting low performing schools are scheduled to be determined during this second year of the task force.

### *2. What are the characteristics of the state accountability system? Organize the response into the following subsections:*

- *Student Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

No such system exists in Utah at this time. The state is in the process of developing a high school exam for 10<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students will be required to pass the 10<sup>th</sup> grade high school basic skills competency test in order to receive a diploma; students not passing will graduate with a certificate of completion. This, as a portion of the new assessment system, is scheduled to be fully implemented by the 2004-05 school year.

- *School Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

The accreditation program of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NWASC) is the accreditation program for high schools, special purpose schools, schools containing grades kindergarten through twelve, elementary schools, junior high schools, and middle schools. All schools, except non-accredited elementary schools, are required to complete the annual accreditation report and file it under USOE procedures.

Schools may be accredited under one of the following categories by the NWASC as recommended by the State Accreditation Advisory Committee:

- **Approved:** a school is classified as "approved" when it equals or exceeds the standards approved by Northwest and the Board.
- **Approved with comment:** a school is classified as "approved with comment" when it has only minor deviations from specific standards.

- **Advised:** a school is classified as "advised" when there are deviations from one or more standard(s). Schools shall also be classified as "advised" when no observable effort has been made, by the second year, to correct deviations from a standard upon which comment was made in the previous year.
- **Warned:** a school is classified as "warned" when there are substantial deviations from one or more standard(s). A "warned" classification is usually given after a school has been "advised" and the deviation persists in the next Annual Report. A school may be "**dropped**" after two consecutive "warned" classifications, as recommended by the State Committee to the Board.

An accredited school may not be dropped to a non-accredited status without first receiving a "warned" classification. Exceptions to this procedure may be made due to discrepancies between information provided on the Annual Report and data received or by observations of the State Committee. If a school disagrees with the recommendation of the State Committee, it may appeal as is outlined in Northwest policies and procedures.

The criteria upon which the accreditation advisory committee makes their recommendation to the NWASC includes the following standards:

**Standard I - The Education Program**, including the school's 1) Philosophy and Objectives; 2) Administrative Policies and Practices; 3) Program of Studies - Core Curriculum; 4) Technology in the Curriculum.

**Standard II - Student Personnel Services**, including 1) Special Services including school services and community Services; 2) Program of Comprehensive Services (available for students including counselors, social workers, school nurses, psychologists, and psychiatrists); 3) Personnel and Organization (ratios and services); 4) Postsecondary Services; 5) Student Conduct and Attendance.

**Standard III - School Plant and Equipment**, including 1) Adequacy; 2) Function; (c) Assurances.

**Standard IV - Library Media Program**, including 1) Student Performance Objectives; 2) Use of Center; 3) Staffing; 4) Facilities; 5) Equipment; 6) Collection and Alternative Resources.

**Standard V – Records**, including 1) Safekeeping; 2) Minimum Information; 3) Handling of student records.

**Standard VI - School Improvement:** a school shall submit pertinent information about its community support, school profile, school mission statement, school goals, and implementation of those goals.

**Standard VII - Preparation of Personnel**, including 1) Preparation of Professional Personnel; 2) Paraprofessional or Non-professional Personnel; 3) Exceptions to the Standard Teacher Preparation; 4) Professional Preparation Deficiency Report; 5) Staff Development; 6) Excessive Turnover and Efficiency of Instruction; 7) Incentive Programs for Teachers and Students.

**Standard VIII – Administration**, including 1) Responsibility and Leadership; and 2) Administrative Staff Size.

**Standard IX - Teacher Load** 1) Maximum Teacher Load; and 2) Personnel Schedule.

**Standard X - Student Activities**, including 1) Student Activities; and 2) Audit for Student Activity Funds and Bond Requirements for Persons Managing Student Funds.

- *District Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

Accountability at the level of the district has taken the form of district reporting, but has not had a system of accreditation or identifying low performing schools.

3. *What methods of measuring progress are used in the state accountability system?*
  - *Relative growth*
  - *Absolute target*
  - *Narrowing the Gap between high and low achievers*
  - *Other*

The state has not been measuring progress as part of the general accountability system; only Title I schools have been determining adequate yearly progress. The accreditation system through the NWASC is based on process as opposed to output.

4. *Are all students included in calculating the measures of progress? If not, who is excluded (probe on inclusion of SWD and LEP students)?*

Student progress is not calculated in this way, and so the question does not apply.

5. *How do the general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I schools compare? Are they the same, or different? How?*

For the 1999-2000 school year, the general school population works only with the accreditation system while Title I schools have additional requirements under federal regulations (see the Title I section).

6. *Are subgroup performance results used as an indicator in the calculation of state accountability measures? If so, how? To identify schools or districts in need of improvement? For recognition and rewards?*

Although not in place for 1999-2000, **House Bill 177** will require the state to disaggregate and monitor student data in a manner similar to the Texas system so that all groups will be expected to make growth annually.

7. *Are charter and/or non-public schools included in the accountability system? If so, how?*

Although non-public schools may be accredited to provide a level of confidence for parents and the ability for students to transfer schools and retain credits, it is not required as it is for public high schools.

8. *Are changes planned for the state accountability system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The **Task Force on Learning Standards and Accountability** will continue to work on issues related to the Utah Performance Assessment System for Students with members of the educational community in the state during the 2000 interim. The issues they will address are to include:

- recognition and rewards to schools and school districts who display exemplary student performance or show significant improvement gains in student performance;
- interventions, including identification of available resources, at the school and district level to assist schools whose students are not achieving acceptable levels of performance;
- determining what constitutes an acceptable level of performance and whether the level should remain constant or be adjusted over time;
- how to best in-service teachers and administrators to maximize the system; and
- discontinuing social promotions.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of accountability? Explain.*

The state is in a process of transition and so the challenge has been the development of a new system.

### **Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts**

1. *How are schools and districts identified as low performing? Using what criteria? Do the identification processes and/or criteria differ for Title I and non-Title I schools?*

Not applicable in the state at this time for the general school and district population.

2. *Does the district or the state decide whether a school is low performing? If the district is involved in the process, how much discretion do they have?*

Not applicable in the state at this time for the general school and district population.

3. *What types of assistance are provided to these schools and districts by the state?*

Not applicable in the state at this time for the general school and district population.

4. *Who provides the state assistance?*

- *School/district support teams*
- *Regional centers*
- *Distinguished educators*
- *SDE staff*
- *Other – Explain*

Not applicable in the state at this time for the general school and district population.

5. *Does support to Title I and all low performing schools and districts differ? Is support generally provided for all schools and districts, or are services specifically designed to help those that are low performing?*

The School Support Teams and Distinguished Educators provided to Title I schools are not provided to others (see Title I section). The general school population does not have this type of support as they have not been identified as low performing.

6. *Has the state established a set of criteria and/or a process for getting schools and districts out of low performing status? If so, what do they include?*

Not applicable in the state at this time for the general school and district population.

7. *Once a school or district is identified as low performing, what types of plans must it prepare? Who are they submitted to once completed? How do they differ from other planning documents?*

Not applicable in the state at this time for the general school and district population.

8. *Are changes planned for the state system of identifying and assisting low performing schools or districts (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

As stated previously, the task force will continue to work in this area during the 1999-2000 school year.

## **Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress**

1. *What criteria are included in the definition of adequate yearly progress for schools and districts under Title I?*

The precursor to the core assessment program tests that are being field tested during the 1999-2000 school year in reading and math were end-of-level tests in grades one through six and in math, reading and science and end-of-course assessments in math and science in grades seven through twelve. Although these assessments were only required in Title I schools, performance levels based on the NAEP were developed for the elementary grades and included:

- Advanced
- Proficient
- Basic
- Below Basic.

The definitions of these levels are in transition at the present time and have not been firmly established for 1999-2000, but will be for the purposes of determining whether adequate yearly progress have been made.

The midpoint has been used as the standard for the Stanford test. Under Title I, the state has been using the core assessment program tests as the basis for adequate yearly progress and requiring the use of these assessments in Title I schools at the elementary level. In all other schools, these assessments were only voluntary until the 1999-2000 year with the changes required under House Bill 33 of 1999. At the secondary level, the Stanford Achievement tests are being used for 1999-2000 to determine if adequate yearly progress is being met.

Due to the changes in the core assessments for 1999-2000 (see the assessment section), the state assessment staff will be working to correlate the current and previous forms of these assessments so that determinations of adequate yearly progress can continue to be made until a new definition and process are fully implemented with the new assessment and accountability system as it is developed.

2. *What are the definitions of adequate yearly progress for the following:*

- *Title I schools and non-Title I schools*
- *Targeted vs. schoolwide programs, charter, non-public and small schools*
- *Districts*

*Are these transitional or final definitions? If transitional, when will the final definitions be in place and what criteria and processes will they include?*

Adequate yearly progress is determined based on all students attending schoolwide program schools, while targeted assistance schools have the option of either including all students or just those participating in the Title I program. These determinations have only applied and been used in Title I schools. Districts have operated under the same system as schools. Non-public schools work under the same system, but there are only eight charter schools in the state for this year and not all are Title I schools. The formal process for charter schools has not been as well established and will be formalized with the new system.

**Elementary schools** demonstrating percentages of students equivalent to the state average percentage at the basic or higher levels of proficiency are considered to have made progress. If a school does not meet the state average percentages, an improvement of three percent in the number of students per year attaining the basic or higher levels will be considered adequate progress.

**Secondary schools** attaining the midpoint of the expected range of performance established for each school shall be considered as having made adequate progress. If a school does not obtain the midpoint, improvement of three national percentile rank points per year in the reading and the mathematics totals will be considered adequate progress.

The state averages referred to are rolling averages and have been moved higher as student performance improves. This definition and process is transitional and will be changed with the new assessment and accountability system.

3. *What is the process for identifying those schools and districts that are not making adequate yearly progress under Title I? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools? If the districts plays a role, does the state provide guidance on local criteria?*

Districts have identified schools not making adequate yearly progress using the standards and definitions developed by the state and then reporting the scores to the state for its reporting processes. The state, however, has been responsible for formal notification. Districts have never been identified in this way.

4. *What are the criteria and processes for identifying schools and districts in need of improvement under Title I? What plans must be prepared? How can a school or district get out of Program Improvement? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools?*

Districts have not historically been identified. Schools not making adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years are identified as in need of improvement, and schools can be placed in program improvement for either reading/language arts or math if they meet the criteria in just one of those subjects. Making adequate progress for two consecutive years after being identified would get a school out of program improvement. Additional school improvement planning is required for those schools in Title I that are low performing.

5. *What types of assistance are provided to those in need of improvement under Title I?*

The state developed and implemented a system of **School Support Teams** to provide technical and other assistance to locals and districts in need of improvement. They have made observations, met with school leaders and teachers and made recommendations to schools and multiple times in the year. If the school has requested professional development for teachers, they have also provided those services.

However, the more recent **Distinguished Educator** program has to a large degree eclipsed the support teams, and these teams have developed a new consulting role. Schools in need of improvement have a distinguished educator assigned to them, and the distinguished educators work with the school throughout the year. These educators have been more centrally located at the SDE and selected by schools for their specific skills and areas of expertise (i.e. math instruction, data analysis, school improvement planning, etc.)

6. *Who provides the assistance?*

School Support Teams have consisted of groups of three people. Distinguished Educators have been more centrally located in the SDE and currently include 30 people with specific areas of expertise and skills. Distinguished educators were selected through a nomination and application process. They include university professionals and retired educators, as well as teachers and officials released temporarily from their districts. Monthly training is provided to these professionals on multiple topics.

7. *Have waivers played a role in this process?*

The state has been on a waiver while developing the new assessment system, specifically with regard to the secondary level testing that will be put into place.

8. *Are there future plans for the state system for schools or districts receiving Title I funding (proposed or enacted and to be implemented) or for the definition of adequate yearly progress? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

Under the new system, Title I and all other schools will work under the same system of assessment and accountability.

9. *Is there alignment between Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress?*

For the 1999-2000 school year, Title I schools work under a process of determining adequate yearly progress and program improvement while all other schools are simply required to work through the school accreditation system with the NWASC.

10. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of Title I? Explain.*

The constant need to align standards and assessment has been a constant issue in all areas.

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