

250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4200

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Contact: Judy Park, associate superintendent for Student Services & Federal Programs

(801) 538-7554 · judy.park@schools.utah.gov

New Federal Calculation Shows Utah Graduation Rates Improve; **Utah Median Class Size Stavs Stable in 2011**

SALT LAKE CITY – New federally-mandated high school graduation calculations show Utah's graduation rate growing from 69 percent in 2008 to 76 percent in 2011, according to data released today by the Utah State Office of Education. Another report released today showed the median class size for elementary classes in 2011 in Utah remained at 24 and at 29 for secondary schools.

New federal rules that went into effect this year change the status of students who earned a GED or special education students who earned diplomas through Utah's Alternative Assessment (UAA). Before 2011, Utah calculated such students as high school graduates; now they are included in the cohort as non-graduates. Utah schools also exempted – that is, they did not count for or against a school's graduation rate -students who could not be located because they moved without contacting the school about the move. The federal rules now add those students in as dropouts. Because of those changes, it appears that Utah's graduation rate has dropped from previous years.

Judy Park, Associate Superintendent for Student Services and Federal Programs, said the new federal calculation is a good calculation and helps make schools more conscientious in tracking down students who have moved and may be in a different school. However, Park did have a qualification. "If you only look at that graduation rate and ignore all of those other students (e.g., students who complete the GED and special education students who maybe did not earn a diploma, but who did not drop out), then I think it's a disservice to those students."

Additional data included in the report shows graduation rates for English language learners increased from 16 to 45 percent between 2008 and 2011 and that graduation rates for economically disadvantaged students has increased from 54 to 63 percent over that same time period.

Both the graduation rate report and the class size report are part of State Superintendent of Public Instruction Larry K. Shumway's annual report on public schools in Utah. They can be found online at http://www.schools.utah.gov/data/Superintendents-Annual-Report/Annual-Report-2010-2011.aspx. The cohort graduation report includes disaggregated data on students and rates for each high school in Utah. The class size report breaks down class sizes by grade and offers information on test results compared to class sizes. More information, including school-level data, can be found on http://schools.utah.gov/data/Educational-Data/Graduation-Dropout-Rates.aspx

For more information, you can view Park's internet news conference on both reports at http://connect.schools.utah.gov/p5z5vyaehid.

www.schools.utah.gov/main/INFORMATION/Online-Newsroom.aspx