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UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Utah Schools Show Improvement in UCAS Accountability System

SALT LAKE CITY – Both Utah elementary and high schools showed year-to-year improvement under the Utah Comprehensive Accountability System (UCAS), according to data released today by the Utah State Office of Education.

The UCAS accountability system is required by the federal government under the waiver granted to Utah under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It is a separate system from the school grading system required under Utah law. School grades were issued earlier this month.

The UCAS system does not assign a letter grade to school academic performance, instead using numerical scores based on both test results and year-to-year growth in test scores. The difference between the two systems is analogous to a report card versus an ACT test score. A report card is a letter grade, a UCAS score is a point total between 0-600. Not unlike ACT scores, schools earning a perfect 600 (or perfect 36 on an ACT) are rare. Generally, UCAS gives greater weighting to student growth than does the school grading system.

Under UCAS schools can score a maximum of 600 points. In elementary school half of the points are generated by spring tests scores in English, math and science, and half by growth in those same test scores. High schools earn points for growth in the core subject scores, but achievement points include a school's graduation rate in addition to test scores.

This year the median elementary school score in Utah was 434 compared to last year's score of 428. For high schools, the median score went from 408 last year to 417 this year. Elementary schools with scores above 434 are doing better than the state median and the same for high schools with scores above 417.

"This year's UCAS scores help to confirm trends we saw earlier this year with our ACT and AP scores. Utah's public schools are improving," said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Martell Menlove.

Anyone interested in reviewing a school's UCAS score or school grade can find the information on the Public School Data Gateway (<https://psdreports.schools.utah.gov/Gateway>) found on the homepage of the Utah State Office of Education website, www.schools.utah.gov. Just type in the name of the school and click on it. The gateway will show basic demographic information about the school and give users the choice of viewing the UCAS data, which was added today, or the school grade report issued earlier this month. Those interested in viewing a spreadsheet with all school UCAS or school grade information can find that information on the Accountability web page, www.schools.utah.gov/data/Educational-Data/Accountability-School-Performance.aspx.

