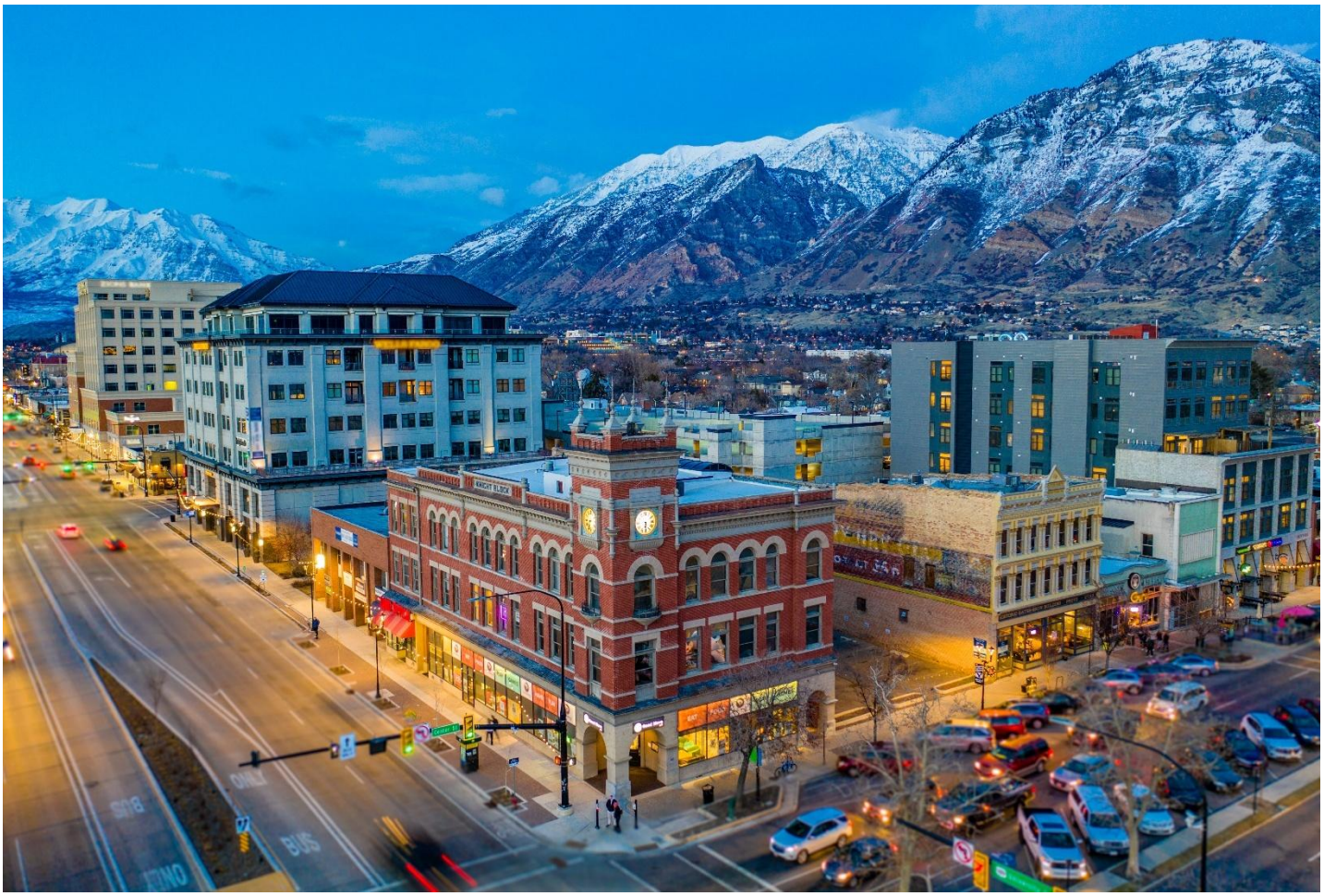

# Education in Utah, Wasatch, and Juab Counties

2025 Early Learning Essentials Topic Deep Dive

MICHAEL D. CALL, PH.D.

CIVICUS CONSULTING GROUP

# Contents

# Executive Summary

This report examines the educational and childcare landscapes in Utah, Wasatch, and Juab Counties, where 127,000 children under age 10 reside. As the youngest county in the nation, Utah County is anchor to the three-county Early Learning Essentials service area—which has 8.5 percent of its population under 5 years. This rate surpasses both state (6.7 percent) and national (5.7 percent) number significantly. Despite a declining birth rate (16.73 per 1,000—down from 26.17 at the turn of the century) the service area's rate is still 40 percent above the U.S. rate of 12.01. Utah County's population growth, in particular, continues to increase dramatically.

Highlights in this report include the following.

- Projections indicate nearly Utah County will be home to nearly 90,000 children under 5 in by 2050, emphasizing infrastructure needs for the County's 749,604 residents (2024 estimate).
- Currently, the service area has 127,000 children under 10 years and 65,190 under 5 (8.7 percent in Utah, 7.5 percent in Juab, 6.3 percent in Wasatch Counties); these are served by 46 licensed childcare centers.
- Licensed childcare centers include 38 in Utah County, six in Wasatch County, and two in Juab County; these centers are estimated to be meeting 35 percent of the need, leaving 18,500-20,700 Utah County children under 6 in unlicensed care.
- The estimated number of preschool-age children currently in unlicensed childcare settings is 25,000. no tracking system to quantify exact numbers.
- There are at least 59 district-affiliated preschools in the service area (two districts have not reported); these preschools enroll an estimated 1,990 children. In addition, there are about 22 special preschool classrooms serving about 400 children.
- The area includes about 15,000 Kindergarten children (Alpine: ~7,500; Provo: ~800; Nebo ~3,000; Wasatch/Juab ~3,700).
- 75 percent of Kindergarteners in Alpine reach reading benchmark (statewide 70 meet it); Nebo lags at 65 percent.
- ELE's service area includes roughly 33,000 grade 1 through grade 3 students.
- Reading and math benchmarks are generally met at or higher than state rates in each of the districts, although there is room for improvement.
- Cohort high school graduation rates vary with Juab leading the area's districts at 96.8 percent; Wasatch (96.5), Nebo (94.3), Alpine (91.4) and Provo (87.1) follow. Statewide, 88.8 percent of the 2024 high school cohort graduated.
- The service area is home to between 69 and 119 children age 0 to 5 in foster care, and approximately 960 homeless school-age children.

# Introduction

Early Learning Essentials, serving Utah, Juab, and Wasatch Counties in Utah, contracted with Civicus Consulting Group to examine the general educational landscape in the service area. The purpose of this study is to review the status of childcare, preschool, early childhood education, and high school success in order to assist staff and board in developing strategies to provide services to the area's growing child population.

Utah County is the youngest county in the United States (among counties with more than 100,000 population). With more than 127,000 children under the age of 10 in ELE's service area, and roughly 63,000 under the age of 5, the need for quality childcare, preschool, and early childhood education is vast. Assessing the detailed needs of these thousands of children is beyond the resources allocated for this project; rather, the current study provides an overview of the status of these children, with some depth regarding academic success.

# Childcare and Preschool

Childcare and preschool services play a pivotal role with Utah's large families, particularly in Utah, Wasatch, and Juab Counties. Strong demand for accessible, high-quality programs childcare and preschool services continues in 2025, with more than 127,000 children under the age of 10 living in the service area.[1]

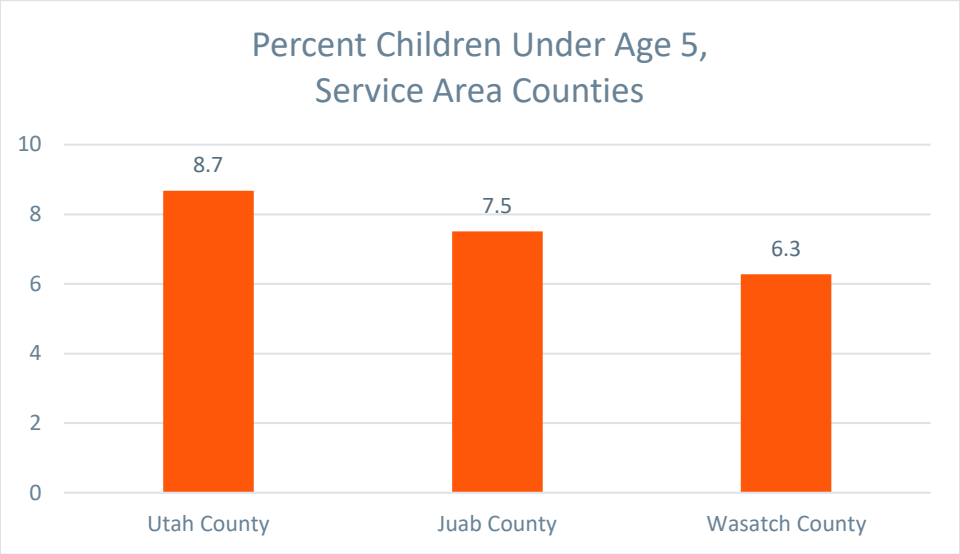


*Figure 1: Percent Children Under Age 5, Service Area Counties*

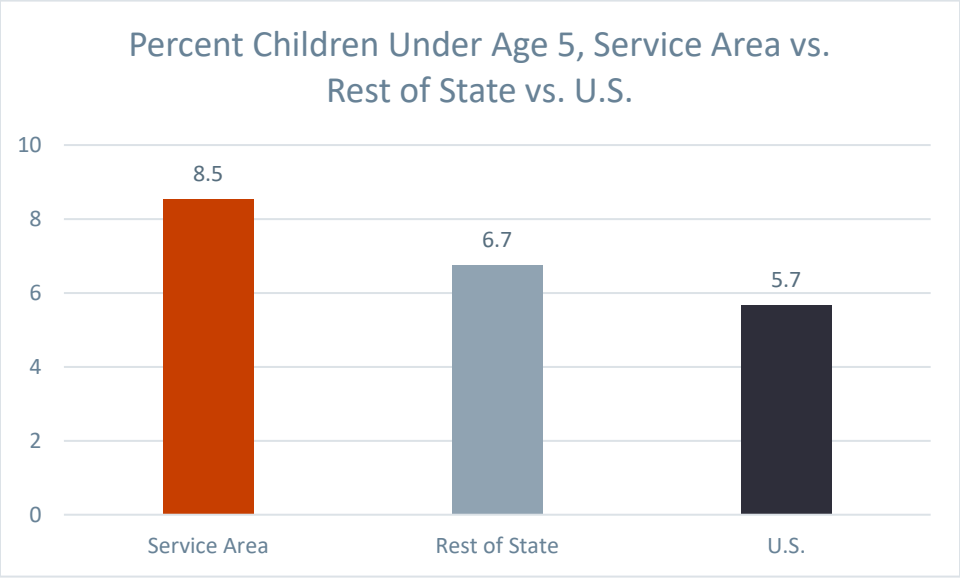


*Figure 2: Percent Children Under Age 5, Service Area vs. Rest of State vs. U.S.*

These three counties include diverse urban hubs of Provo and Orem in Utah County to more suburban areas of Utah County and Heber City in Wasatch County—as well as rural areas in Wasatch and Juab Counties. Because Utah ranks among the fastest-growing states, demand for childcare is increasing, with childcare costs averaging 15 percent to 20 percent of household income.[2]

About 8.7 percent of Utah County residents are children under the age of 5, while 7.5 percent of Juab County residents, and 6.3 percent of Wasatch County residents, are in the same age group. Overall, 8.5 percent of the service area's population is under age 5 (about 63,000 children); this compares to 6.7 percent for the rest of the state and only 5.7 percent nationwide.[3]

Because Utah County's population is the largest among the three service area counties (749,604—compared to 13,116 in Juab County and 38,802 in Wasatch County), attention is drawn to Utah County's numbers.[4] Utah County is

[1] U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey, Table S0101. For ease, this source will be cited ACS, Table XXX.
[2] 'Shocking': New report raises alarms about Utah child care access. (2023, October 25). *The Salt Lake Tribune.* https://www.sltrib.com/news/2023/10/25/shocking-new-report-raises-alarms
[3] ACS Table S0101
[4] University of Utah Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, *Utah Population Committee Population Estimates,* 2025.

the youngest county in the nation, with 32.2 percent of its population being under 18 years (that is, considering only counties with populations greater than 100,000).[5]

*Table 1: Youngest Counties in U.S.: Percent Under 18 years*

| Youngest Counties in U.S. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Population | Population < 18 Years | Percent < 18 Years |
| Utah County, Utah | 683,622 | 219,931 | 32.2 |
| Hidalgo County, Texas | 880,921 | 276,639 | 31.4 |
| Tulare County, California | 475,774 | 143,115 | 30.1 |
| Kern County, California | 910,433 | 262,550 | 28.8 |
| Fresno County, California | 1,012,152 | 283,823 | 28.0 |
| Fort Bend County, Texas | 859,721 | 231,703 | 27.0 |
| Stanislaus County, California | 552,250 | 148,315 | 26.9 |
| Prince William County, Virginia | 484,625 | 129,111 | 26.6 |
| San Joaquin County, California | 787,416 | 208,930 | 26.5 |
| El Paso County, Texas | 866,275 | 228,795 | 26.4 |

The three-county service area is experiencing a decline in birth rates (number of live births per 1,000 population), but remains higher than the rest of the state and the U.S. While the rate in the U.S. in 2024 (12.01) is nearly the same as the rest of the state (12.28), the service area is nearly 40 percent higher, at 16.73.[6]

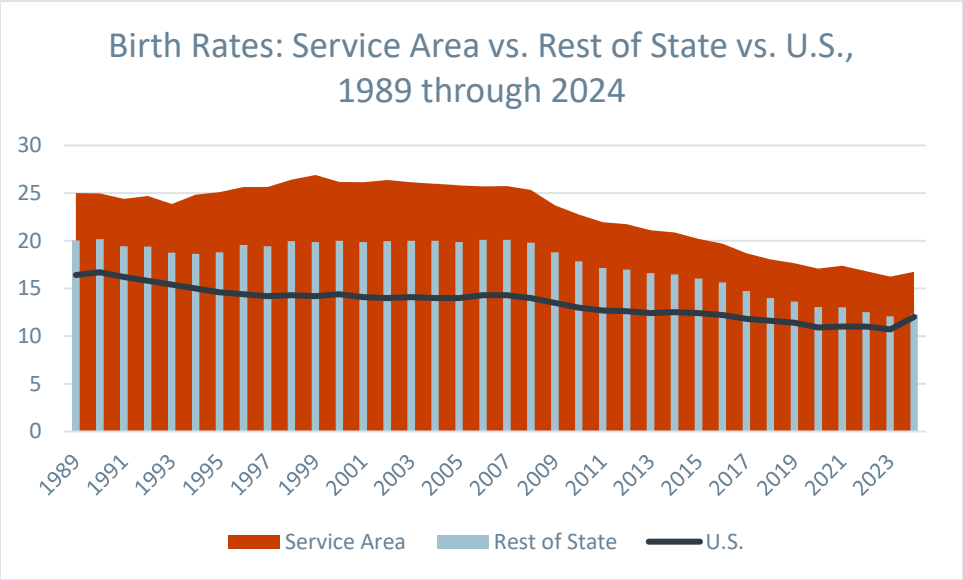


*Figure 3: Birth Rates: Service Area vs. Rest of State vs. U.S., 1989 through 2024*

Although birth rates in the service area are declining, demand will likely remain high because of the overall population growth—particularly in Utah County. This county's population has increased from 385,671 in 2000 to nearly 750,000 in 2024. And, for the first time this century, in-migration has outpaced natural growth in Utah County.[7] And while Utah County has grown by 40.6 percent from 2010 to 2023, Wasatch County has increased by 61.5 percent—and Juab County by 24.5 percent.[8]

[5] ACS Table B01002
[6] Utah Department of Health and Human Services, IBIS query
[7] Utah Population Committee
[8] ACS Table B01003

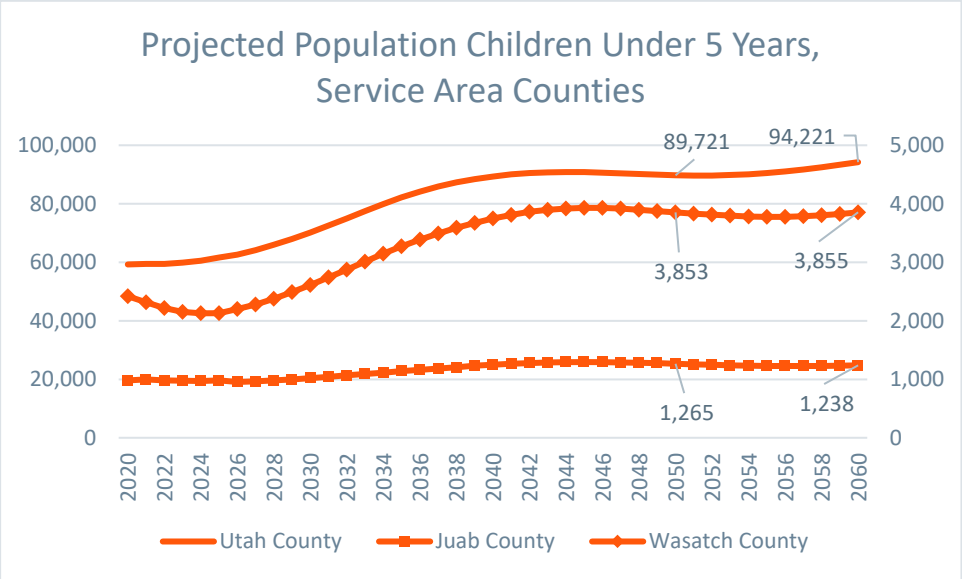


*Figure 4: Projected Population Children Under 5 Years, Service Area Counties*

Utah County's young children (less than 5 years) population is expected to be nearly 90,000 by 2050; Wasatch County's will be about 3,853 and Juab County's will be 1,265.[9]

## Childcare

There is no database of unlicensed, home-based childcare in Utah. However, Voices for Utah Children estimates that statewide, licensed childcare meets only 35 percent of the need for children under age 6—with all available parents in the workforce.[10] Using these estimates, there are between 18,500 and 20,700 children under age 6 in Utah County who are being cared for by extended family, unlicensed providers, or others during work hours. However, the percentage of parents who are at home is not accurately determined—especially considering that some two-parent families rotate work schedules so at least one parent is tending young children at all times.

### State Licensed

To become a licensed, home-based childcare operator in Utah, applicants must obtain either a Residential Certificate Child Care (for up to 8 children) or a Licensed Family Child Care license (for up to 16 children) from the Utah Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Licensing and Background Checks (DLBC). These are the two primary types for residential (home-based) programs, with the licensed family option having slightly stricter requirements.

Applicants must be at least 18 years old, and all household members aged 12 and older must undergo a background check through the Utah Division of Licensing and Background Checks. This includes

[9] Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, Population Projections, 2025
[10] Voices for Utah Children, *Mapping Care for Kids*

FBI fingerprinting for applicants or household members age 18 or older. Households with members who have committed certain felonies or have child abuse convictions will be disqualified.[11]

In addition, about 90 minutes of free online training must be completed prior to application. Training reviews licensing rules, child safety, and operations suggestions. Applicants must also obtain certification in infant and child CPR and first aid, which requires hands-on testing. In addition, 20 hours of annual training is required for residential certificate providers and 30 hours for licensed family providers; this training focuses on child development, health, and safety.[12]

Applicants must also obtain a local business license from the city or county of residence. Zoning laws must be followed.[13]

Providers with residential certification may have up to eight children total (including own household members under age 4). Overall, the minimum ratio is one provider per eight children; however, providers must have at least one adult per four infants and children up to two years old. ; ratios are 1:8 overall, but stricter for infants (1:4 for under 2 years). Licensed family certification permits up to 16 children (including own household members under age 4); there must be no more than to 12 children per caregiver (or 24 with two caregivers). The applicant or an officially designated and qualified adult caregiver must be present at least 50 percent of operating hours.[14]

The home must meet fire safety standards such as presence of smoke detectors and extinguishers. Proper sanitation must be provided. There must be at least 35 square feet per child indoors or in fenced outdoor play areas. If care exceeds four hours, nutritious meals or snacks must be provided. Written policies for illness, emergencies, and positive guidance must be provided and enforced. Corporal punishment is not permitted.[15]

Staff assistants must be at least 16 years old; those in primary caregiver roles must be at least 18. Provider designees (for absences) need specific training. Written policies for admissions, parent communication, and behavior management must be provided and followed.[16]

*Number, Ages Accepted, and Available Slots*

According to the Utah Office of Child Care, there are 46 licensed childcare centers in the three-county service area; 38 of these are in Utah County, while six are in Wasatch County and two are in Juab County.[17]

---

11 Official DLBC Child Care Licensing Rules and Applications: https://dlbc.utah.gov/home/office-of-licensing/child-care/rules/ and https://dlbc.utah.gov/home/office-of-licensing/child-care/applications
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 Care About Childcare, Program List, https://jobs.utah.gov/occ/cac/search/programs-list

Most of the licensed childcare facilities in the service area accept children up to age 5. Of the 46 centers, only 24 of them accept children older than age 5.[18]

*Table 2: Licensed Childcare Facilities and Ages Accepted, by County and Service Area*

| Licensed Childcare Facilities and Ages Accepted, by County and Service Area | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total Licensed | Infant 0-11 months | Toddlers 12-23 months | 2-year-olds | 3-year-olds | 4-year-olds | 5-year-olds | School Age (6-12 years) |
| Utah County | 38 | 34 | 37 | 39 | 39 | 39 | 38 | 24 |
| Wasatch County | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Juab County | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Service Area | 46 | 38 | 41 | 43 | 43 | 43 | 42 | 27 |

As of 30 August 2025, there were 596 slots available at licensed childcare centers in Utah County, 30 in Wasatch County, and 18 in Juab County—for a combined 644 vacancies.[19]

As of July 2025, there were 3,937 parent recipients of childcare subsidies in Utah County, 111 in Juab County, and none in Wasatch County. Note that "recipients" covers all household members receiving the benefit; the number of children in each household is 1 or more.[20]

*Cost*

The cost of licensed childcare in the service area is difficult to establish, but ranges are helpful. The cost of childcare is affected by multiple factors, including the following.

- Number of children in the center (fewer children command higher rates)
- Number siblings being cared for (discounts often provided for multiple siblings)
- Age of children
- Hours of care
- Location
- Staffing ratios
- Program (care only is less than care with structured activities)
- Supply and demand

Child Care Aware of America, a nonprofit organization, estimates that the annual cost of full-time infant care in Utah is $14,160 (2024 figure).[21]

In 2023, Voices for Utah Children published Mapping out Child Care, a call for public policies to improve the industry. Home-based care for children 0 to 24 months in Utah County was estimated to be

[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Utah Department of Workforce Services, Workforce Statistics: Public Assistance Recipients, August 2025. https://jobs.utah.gov/wi/data/misstats/pubassist
[21] Child Care Aware of America, State Child Care Prices 2024. https://www.childcareaware.org/price-landscape24/#PriceofCare

$8,323 annually, slightly lower than Juab and Wasatch Counties' $84,00. Center-based care, on the other hand, is about $11,200.[22]

*Table 3: Estimated 2023 Annual Childcare Costs ($)*

| Estimated 2023 Annual Childcare Costs ($) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Home-based Care for Infant/Toddler | Center-based Care for Infant/Toddler | Home-based Care for Preschool-aged Child | Center-based Care for Preschool-aged Child |
| Utah | 8,323 | 11,232 | 7,352 | 8,487 |
| Juab | 8,400 | 11,232 | 7,410 | 8,487 |
| Wasatch | 8,400 | 11,100 | 7,440 | 8,487 |

## Not State Licensed

It is impossible to know the number of unlicensed, home-based childcare operations in Utah, Wasatch. and Juab Counties because these facilities operate without formal registration or oversight from state regulatory bodies. Unlike licensed childcare providers, which are required to register with Utah's Department of Health and Human Services and comply with specific regulations, unlicensed operations are not tracked in any centralized database. Many of these home-based providers may offer services informally, such as through personal networks or word-of-mouth. In addition. the lack of mandatory inspections or reporting requirements means there is no mechanism to identify or count them. The private and often small-scale nature of these operations makes it impossible to estimate determine their number.

# Preschool

Preschool education in the three-county service area plays a critical role in early childhood development and in preparing young children for lifelong learning. There is a mix of high-quality, accessible programs with varying affordability in the area. Private and public preschools, as well as informal, unlicensed home-based operations, are available. Understanding the availability, cost, and regulatory environment of preschool programs in the service area helps Early Learning Essentials provide services and support to families.

Private preschools that provide no childcare do not register with the state or district; they need only a local business license from the city or county. There is no regulation of these private preschools, and some (perhaps many) operate out of homes and without licensing as childcare centers. Public preschool programs, on the other hand, are under the auspices of local school districts and operate in concert with the respective district, in coordination with the Utah State Board of Education.

Charter preschools in Utah operate as part of the state's public charter school system, which is authorized and overseen by the Utah State Charter School Board under the Utah State Board of Education (USBE). These schools are tuition-free, publicly funded alternatives to traditional district schools and can include preschool programs (typically for ages 3-5) as part of their early childhood education offerings, often aligned with state standards like the Utah Early Childhood Standards. Unlike private preschools, charter preschools must comply with state educational

[22] Voices for Utah Children, *Mapping Care for Kids,* 2023

guidelines but have flexibility in curriculum. They are not required to obtain separate childcare licensing if operating only as educational programs for less than four hours per day.

According to the National Institute for Early Education Research, known participation in Utah preschools is relatively low. In the 2023-2024 school year, only 2,011 children were enrolled in public preschools, and state spending per child was about $3,326. Utah met six of 10 quality standards.[23] This enrollment figure, however, is likely low; districts in ELE's report enrollment of approximately 1,990 in tuition-based programs, and 400 in special classes.

## District Preschools

Public preschool programs in the service area provide early education for children ages 3 to 5. Both free special education preschools and tuition-based preschools are available. Special education preschools (mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) are provided at no cost to families of children with developmental delays or disabilities (in accordance with district policies); these schools provide individualized education programs (IEPs). Tuition-based preschools require fees but may offer subsidies for low-income families through grants or Title I funds. These programs typically align with the state's Early Learning Standards.

District preschool directors report approximately 59 tuition-based preschool classrooms in ELE's service area, with each hosting two sessions of preschool per day. These include 22 special preschool classrooms for children with development delays or disabilities. About 2,400 children attend these preschools (including about 400 in special preschool programs).

*Table 4: District-Based Preschools, 2025*

District-Based Preschools, 2025[24]

| | Preschool Classrooms | Preschool Sites | Sessions per Classroom | Preschool Slots Available | Estimated Slots Filled |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alpine (tuition-based) | 28 | 28 | 2 | 1,064 | 958 |
| Alpine (special classes) | 22 | 21 | 2 | 572 | 400 |
| Nebo | 19 | 14 | 2 | 650 | 650 |
| Provo | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Juab (Red Cliffs Elementary) | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Wasatch | 12 | 5 | 2 | 382 | 382 |
| Total (estimate) Tuition | 59 | 47 | | 2,096 | 1,990 |
| Total (estimate) Special | 22 | 21 | | 572 | 400 |

### *Other (Not District-Affiliated)*

Estimating the number of home-based, non-licensed, and non-registered preschools in the Early Learning Essentials service area—encompassing Utah County, Wasatch County, and Juab County—is impossible. Because they are not regulated and therefore operating outside official tracking systems like state licensing databases or enrollment surveys, there is no way to discern the number. For context, the area's total population exceeds 750,000 with Utah County's young demographic (median age 25.5) driving a high concentration of preschool-aged children (approximately 25,000 aged 3 and 4). Although the large

[23] National Institute for Early Education Research, *State of Preschool 2024 Yearbook,* Utah State Profile, 2025. https://nieer.org/yearbook/2024/state-profiles/utah

[24] Only Alpine School District segregated out special preschool figures for this report

number of young children suggests potential demand for hundreds of informal home-based arrangements—such as parent-led learning playgroups or neighborhood learning caregivers—it is impossible to estimate the number in operation.

# Kindergarten

Kindergarten education in Utah, Wasatch, and Juab Counties appears to be strong. Early childhood education is a critical foundation for lifelong learning and development; because of the large number of students, the service area has unique challenges in providing quality education..

## Number

In 2024, there were 10,168 Kindergarten students enrolled in public schools in the service area, with about 93 percent of them being in Utah County. The average class size ranged from 18 in Juab County to 24 in Wasatch County. There were 2,597 Kindergarten students in charter schools; the average class size for the service area was 26.[25]

*Table 5: Kindergarten Students Enrollment, Public and Private, by County and Service Area*

| Kindergarten Students Enrollment, Public and Private, by County and Service Area | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Public School Kindergarten Students | Public School Kindergarten Classes | Average Students per Class, Public | Charter School Kindergarten Students | Charter School Kindergarten Classes | Average Students per Class, Charter |
| Utah County | 9,397 | 429 | 22 | 2,597 | 99 | 26 |
| Juab County | 210 | 12 | 18 | - | - | - |
| Wasatch County | 561 | 23 | 24 | 212 | 8 | 27 |
| Service Area | 10,168 | 464 | 22 | 2,597 | 101 | 26 |

## Performance

### Reading

In Utah, the State Board of Education's reading benchmarks are based on the Acadience Reading assessment. Student reading is assessed as "at benchmark" or "above benchmark" based on their scores. Those who do not reach the benchmark are categorized as "well below benchmark" or "below benchmark." These categories correlate with likelihood of reading at benchmark in successive grade assessments, thereby providing opportunities for intervention. Math assessments follow the same protocols.[26]

In 2025, Kindergarten students in the service area's five large school districts generally fared well in reading (because of low student population, Tintic School District is not included in these data). The school

[25] Utah State Board of Education. (2024). *Average Daily Membership Report.* https://schools.utah.gov/datastatistics/reports
[26] Utah State Board of Education. (2024). *2023-2024 Early Literacy Report.* https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED663726.pdf

district with the largest percentage of students at or above reading benchmark at the end of the school year is Juab, with 87.1 percent; the district with the lowest percentage is Nebo, at 75.4.[27]

*Table 6: Kindergarteners Reaching Reading Benchmarks, by School District and State, 2025*

Kindergarteners Reaching Reading Benchmarks, by School District and State, 2025

| | Well Below Benchmark | Below Benchmark | At Benchmark | Above Benchmark | Total Below Benchmark | Total At or Above Benchmark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alpine | 7.6 | 12.2 | 26.2 | 54.0 | 19.9 | 80.1 |
| Nebo | 11.3 | 13.4 | 22.5 | 52.9 | 24.7 | 75.4 |
| Provo | 8.0 | 8.0 | 23.9 | 60.1 | 16.0 | 84.0 |
| Juab | 4.3 | 8.6 | 25.8 | 61.4 | 12.9 | 87.1 |
| Wasatch | 11.8 | 10.8 | 26.4 | 51.0 | 22.6 | 77.4 |
| State | 10.1 | 12.0 | 24.6 | 53.3 | 22.1 | 77.9 |

The percentage of Kindergarten students reaching reading benchmark has been increasing over the past four years. While Provo has the highest percentage of Kindergarteners at or above reading benchmark, the most-improved district in the service area is Nebo—going from 54.6 percent in 2021 to 73.2 percent in 2024. Similar—though less dramatic—improvements have been seen in every school district in the service area, as well as statewide.

While looking at the percentage of Kindergarteners who are reading at or above benchmark is the glass-half-full approach, the efforts of Early Learning Essentials and other stakeholders are focused on those who are *not* at benchmark. Steady improvement has clearly been accomplished since 2021. The school district with the lowest percentage of Kindergarteners not meeting reading benchmark is Provo, at 8.1 percent (down from 22.6 percent in 2021).[28]

*Table 7: Kindergarteners Below Reading Benchmarks, by District and State, 2021-2025*

Kindergarteners Below Reading Benchmarks, by District and State, 2021-2025

| | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alpine | 30.8 | 29.3 | 24.0 | 20.5 | 12.3 |
| Nebo | 45.4 | 39.3 | 30.2 | 26.8 | 13.5 |
| Provo | 22.6 | 25.8 | 18.4 | 16.7 | 8.1 |
| Juab | 31.9 | 33.2 | 23.4 | 21.6 | 8.6 |
| Wasatch | 32.7 | 20.2 | 21.2 | 20.9 | 10.9 |
| State | 33.4 | 30.6 | 25.6 | 21.8 | 22.1 |

[27] Utah State Board of Education (2025). *Acadience Reading School Year 2025.* https://schools.utah.gov/datastatistics/_datastatisticsfiles_/_reports_/_assessments_/K3EarlyLiteracy2024.pdf
[28] Ibid.

The chart below depicts the dramatic nature of improvements in Kindergarten reading in the service area and statewide.

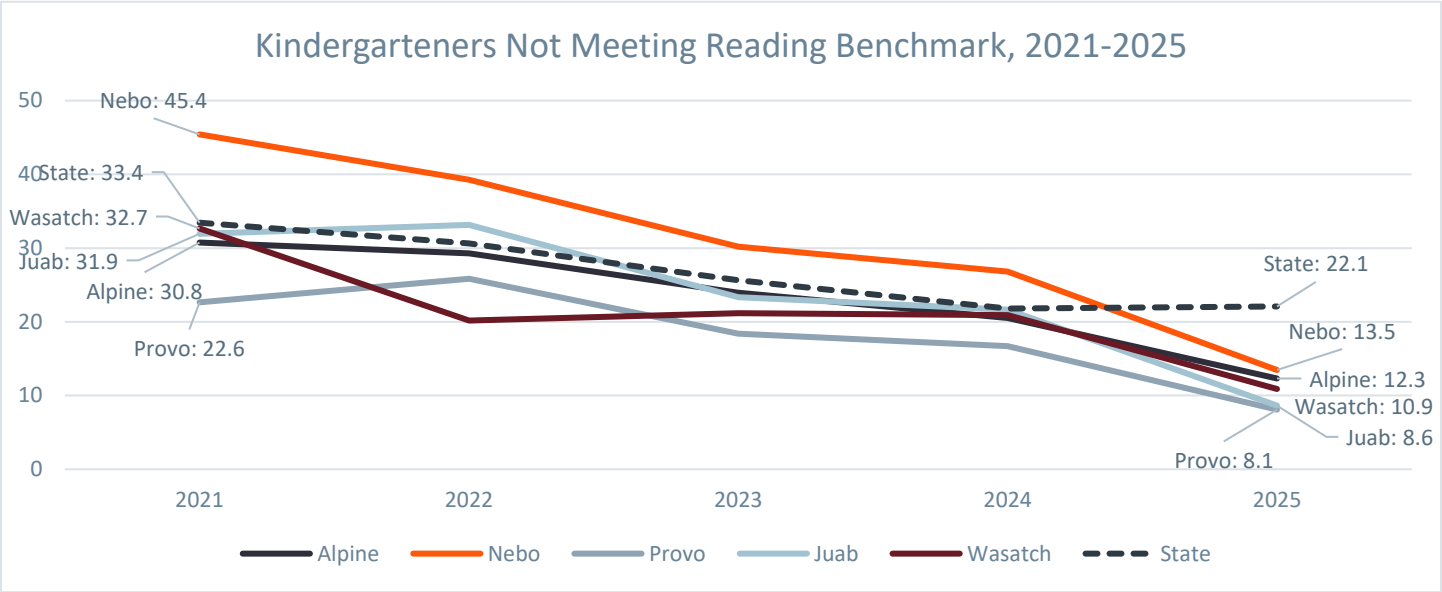


*Figure 5: Kindergarteners Not Meeting Reading Benchmark, 2021-2025*

The question of whether the recent pandemic affecting reading capacity in early childhood is necessary. Because of school closures and general educational disruptions in 2020, data for the school year 2019-2020 is based on mid-year testing and limited end-of-year testing. The state's early literacy report for this school year explains that the state board of education "made a decision to prorate reported membership based on an estimate that, on average, most LEAs will have been at about their 145th day of membership as of the last day of school prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic soft school closures (March 13, 2020)...differences in attendance and membership reporting requirements during the COVID-19 Pandemic soft school closures is that the mobility and chronic absence rates are lower than expected (based on trend data), and attendance and average daily membership rates are higher than expected (based on trend data)" (10).[29]

An additional factor when considering the pandemic's effect on early childhood literacy test scores is that the state board of education moved from utilizing the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment prior to SY 2019 to the current Acadience Reading assessment. Therefore, comparing test scores prior to SY 2019 to test scores in 2019 and later is impossible. For this analysis, the percentage of Kindergarteners not reaching reading benchmark from SY 2019 and 2020 are averaged to calculate a "pre-pandemic average."

[29] Ibid., SY 2020

For Alpine School District, the pre-pandemic percent of 21.9 is much lower than the 2021, 2022, and 2023 percentages of 30.8, 29.3, and 24.0, respectively. 2024's 20.5 percent is an improvement of the pre-pandemic percentage, but 2025's 12.3 indicates significant improvement. Using this method to analyze the effects of the pandemic on Kindergarten reading skills indicates a three-year negative impact.

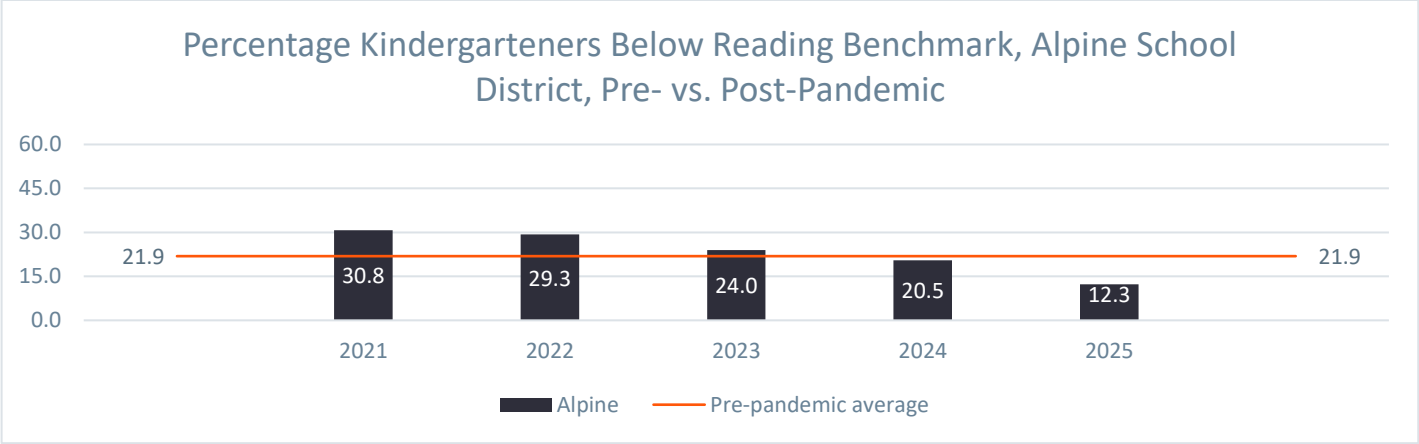


*Figure 6: Percentage Kindergarteners Below Reading Benchmark, Alpine School District, Pre- vs. Post-Pandemic*

However, the variances documented in Nebo and Provo school districts are not as pronounced. Nebo's pre-pandemic average of 44.6 percent of Kindergarteners not reading at benchmark was only slightly worse than 2021's 45.4; the percent has declined steadily for the next three school years; in 2025, only 13.5 percent of Kindergarteners were not reading at or above benchmarks.

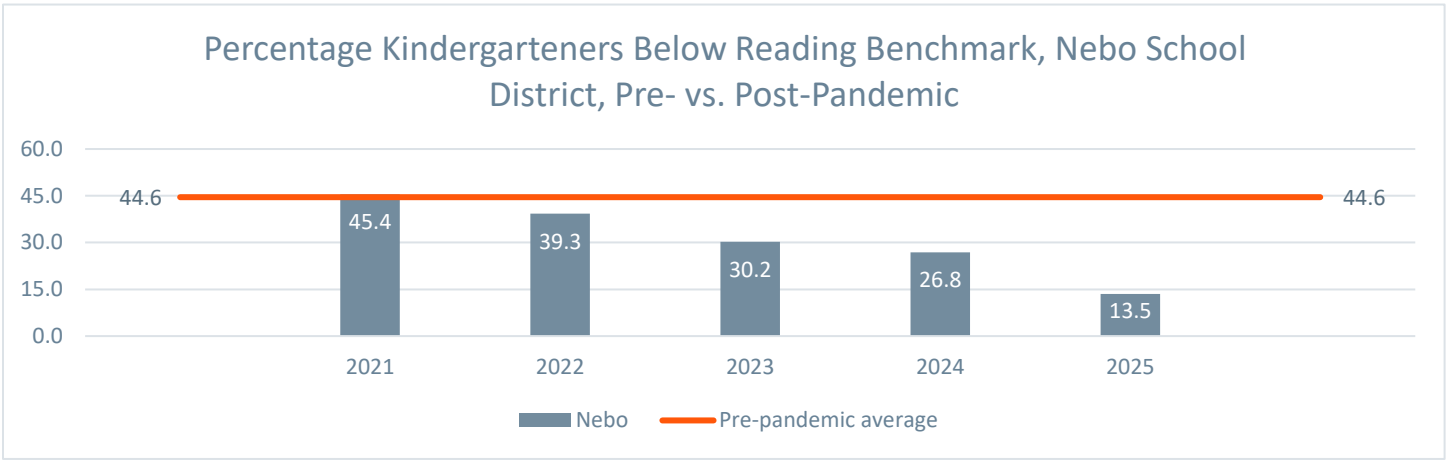


*Figure 7: Percentage Kindergarteners Below Reading Benchmark, Nebo School District, Pre- vs. Post-Pandemic*

Provo School District experienced no change in 2021's percentage of students not meeting reading benchmarks, and an increase of 3.2 percentage points in 2022. By 2025, it was down to 8.1 percent.

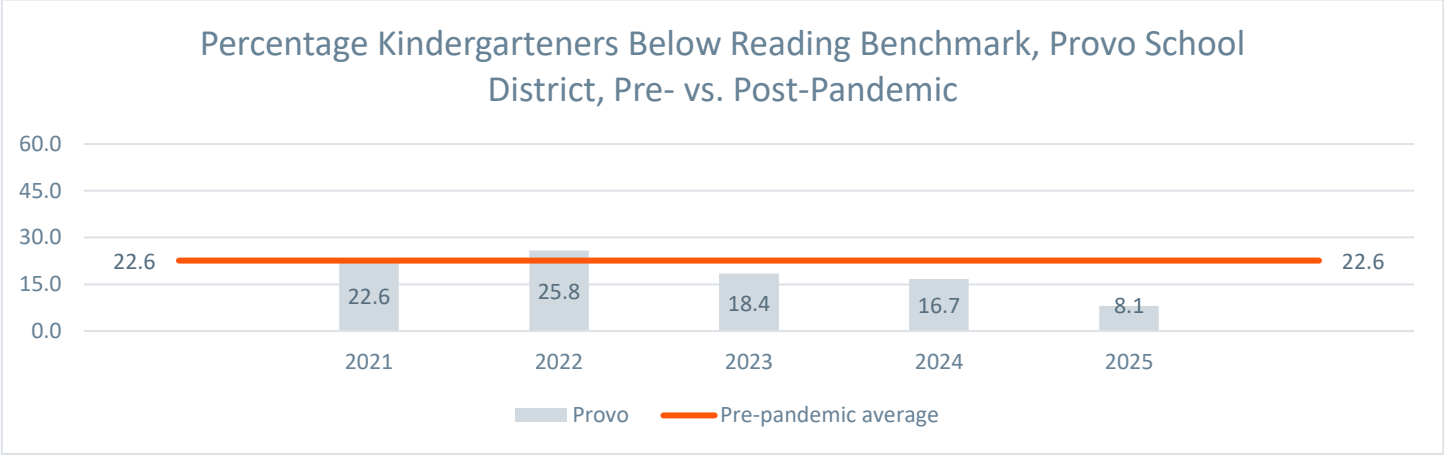


*Figure 8: Percentage Kindergarteners Below Reading Benchmark, Provo School District, Pre- vs. Post-Pandemic*

Juab School District saw similar results, with about three- and five-percentage point increases in the years following the pandemic. In 2025, the percentage had dropped to 8.6.

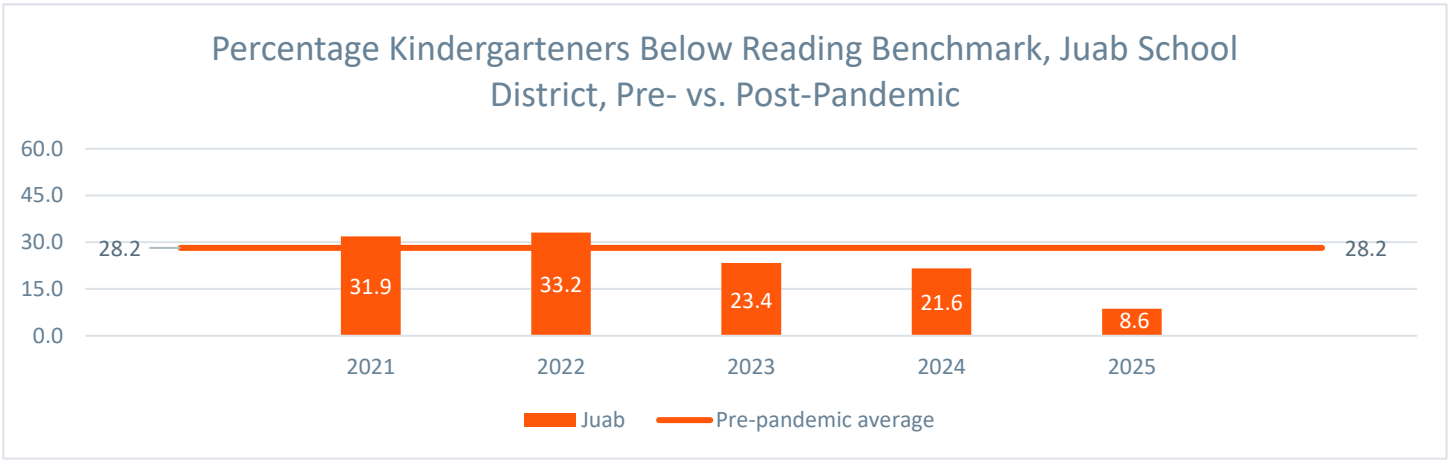


*Figure 9: Percentage Kindergarteners Below Reading Benchmark, Juab School District, Pre- vs. Post-Pandemic*

Wasatch School District experienced a dramatic increase in the percentage of Kindergarteners not reading at benchmark in the year following the pandemic—jumping from a pre-pandemic average of 22.3 to 32.7 percent in 2021. By 2025, the percentage had dropped to 10.9.

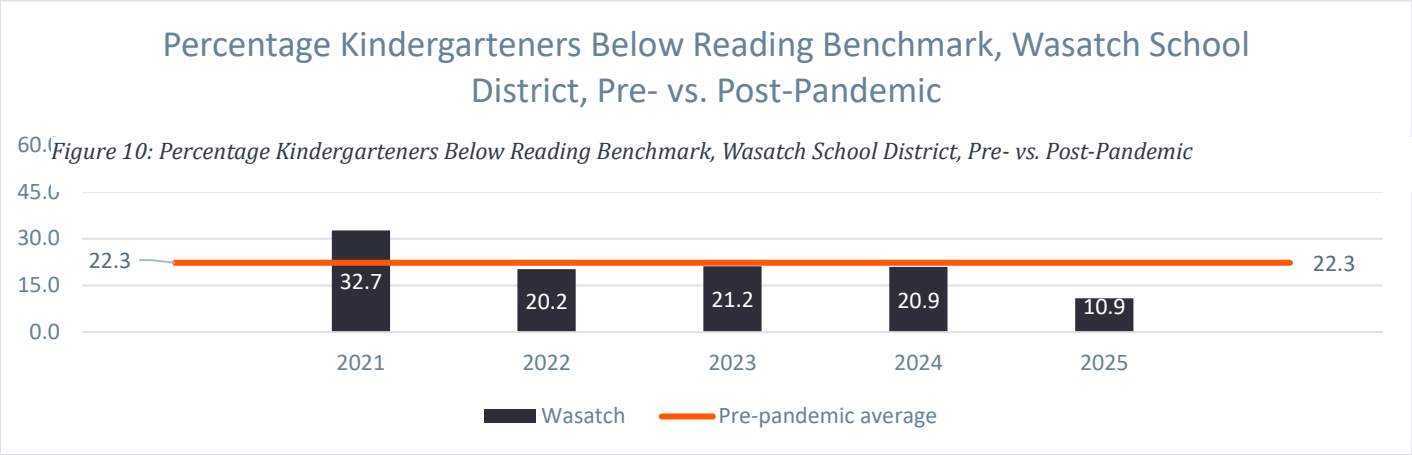


*Figure 10: Percentage Kindergarteners Below Reading Benchmark, Wasatch School District, Pre- vs. Post-Pandemic*

Statewide, Kindergarteners had a pre-pandemic average of 30.1 percent; this increased to 33.4 in 2021 and decreased every year since.

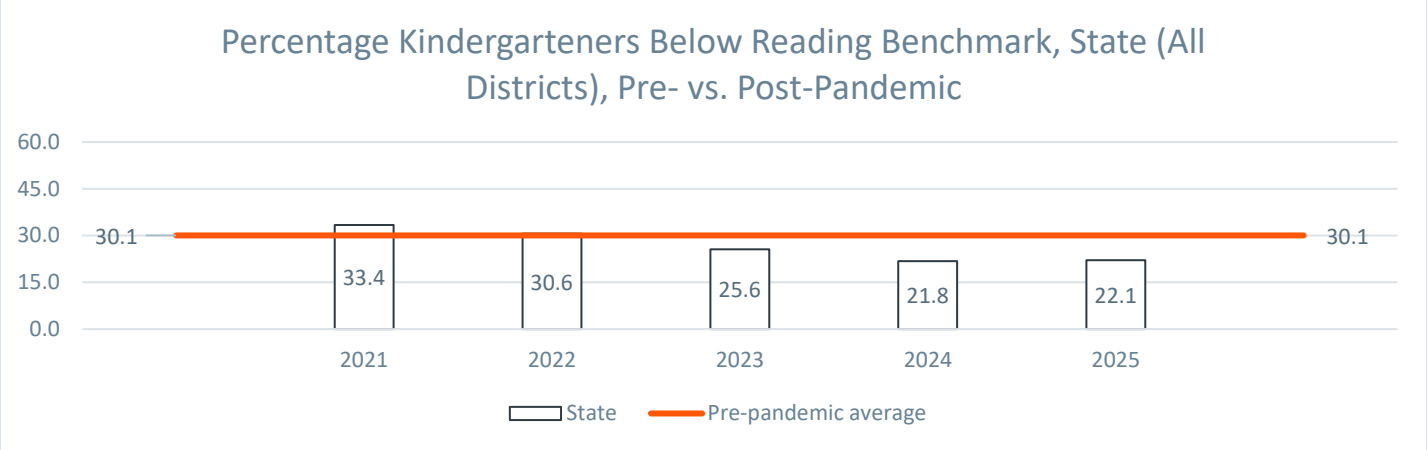


*Figure 11: Percentage Kindergarteners Below Reading Benchmark, State (All Districts), Pre- vs. Post-Pandemic*

Utah is not alone in experiencing pandemic-related negative impacts in childhood learning. National studies have shown a serious impact on students' academic performance—including reading—during and after the pandemic. One study, which drew on data from about 5 million students in grades 3 through 8, found that overall reading scores dropped from 2019 to 2021, suggesting that Kindergarteners and other early childhood students likewise suffered.[30]

[30] Kuhfeld, M., Lewis, K. & Peltier, T. Reading achievement declines during the COVID-19 pandemic: evidence from 5 million U.S. students in grades 3–8. *Reading and Writing* 36, 245–261 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-022-10345-8

## Math

Kindergarten math curriculum provides foundational skills for later learning through hands-on, engaging activities. These activities introduce children to to numbers, shapes, and basic problem solving. Typically, children learn to count to 20, begin to understand one-to-one relationships in the counting, recognizing numbers, and compare quantities of objects. Instruction also includes basic addition and subtraction (usually through engagement with objects or fingers). Children learn to identify and describe basic shapes and engage in "larger than," "smaller than," or "the same as" activities to compare shapes in terms of size, length, or weight. Learning through activities such as games and songs is abundant.

As is the case with reading, math instruction for this young age includes assessments to determine whether the student is progressing appropriately. In 2025, 77.9 percent of Kindergarteners statewide tested at or above math benchmarks. Provo School District had 73.7 percent of its students reaching or exceeding the benchmark; Wasatch School District had the lowest percentage, at 49.5.[31]

*Table 8: Percent Kindergarteners Reaching Math Benchmarks, 2025*

Percent Kindergarteners Reaching Math Benchmarks, 2025

| | Well Below Benchmark | Below Benchmark | At Benchmark | Above Benchmark | Total Below Benchmark | Total At or Above Benchmark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alpine | 17.3 | 19.1 | 17.2 | 46.4 | 36.4 | 63.6 |
| Nebo | 17.5 | 18.6 | 17.0 | 46.9 | 36.1 | 63.9 |
| Provo | 13.1 | 13.1 | 14.3 | 59.4 | 26.3 | 73.7 |
| Juab | 14.7 | 15.3 | 15.3 | 54.6 | 30.1 | 69.9 |
| Wasatch | 26.8 | 23.8 | 24.1 | 25.4 | 50.5 | 49.5 |
| State | 10.1 | 12.0 | 24.6 | 53.3 | 22.1 | 77.9 |

Despite the increases in percentages of students meeting reading benchmarks, math scores—though improved—remain a concern. While 22.1 percent of Kindergarteners statewide are below math benchmarks, 50.6 percent of Wasatch students, and 36.4 percent of Alpine students, meet the benchmark.

*Table 9: Kindergarteners Below Reading Benchmarks, by District and State, 2022-2025*

Kindergarteners Below Reading Benchmarks, by District and State, 2022-2025[32]

| | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alpine | 59.5[33] | n/a | 31.9 | 36.4 |
| Nebo | 54.1 | 53.7 | 42.3 | 36.1 |
| Provo | n/a | n/a | n/a | 26.2 |
| Juab | n/a | n/a | 57.3 | 30.0 |
| Wasatch | 51.6 | 49.4 | 37.2 | 50.6 |
| State | 52.9 | 46.2 | 39.1 | 22.1 |

[31] All math data from Utah State Board of Education, Assessment Reports. https://schools.utah.gov/datastatistics/reports
[32] Data not available for districts and years marked n/a
[33] For Alpine in 2022, "Well Below Benchmark" (< 20%) and "Below Benchmark" (40–49%) are estimated using midpoints (15% and 44.5%, respectively) due to the lack of precise percentages, yielding a sum of 59.5%.

# Grade 1 through 3

Districts and charter schools in the service area teach nearly 40,000 students in grade 1, 2, and 3 each year. This number is projected to increase as many as 52,000 by 2040.[34]

The service area's school districts align their curricula with the state's Utah Core Standards to build foundational literacy and numeracy skills essential for academic success. The reading curriculum emphasizes phonics mastery, vocabulary building, and comprehension of literature and informational texts. Students progress from decoding words and identifying phonemes in grade 1 to analyzing texts and constructing meaning in grade 3. Acadience Reading assessments are administered three times (beginning, middle, and end of year) annually to track success and provide personal intervention when needs are first detected.

The math curriculum in these grade levels focuses on problem solving (per the state's Mathematics Core Standards). Grade 1 students build addition and subtraction skills; grade 2 students learn multi-digit operations and measurement; grade 3 children build multiplication and division skills, learn fractions, and engage in practical math application skills.

## Number

Of the approximately 153,000 public school students in the service area, there are about 33,127 students in grades 1, 2, and 3. Alpine School District is home to most of these students, at 17,890; Nebo's 9,701 are almost half of Alpines, but more than three times the number in Provo School District (2,945). Wasatch School District adds 1,935; Juab teaches slightly more than 600, while its neighbor to the west, Tintic School District, has about 50.

*Table 10: School District Enrollment, Service Area, Grades Kindergarten–3, 2025*

| School District Enrollment, Service Area, Grades Kindergarten–3, 2025 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| District | Total K-12 | Kindergarten | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 |
| Alpine District | 84,757 | 5,435 | 5,655 | 5,877 | 6,358 |
| Nebo District | 42,946 | 3,149 | 3,105 | 3,240 | 3,356 |
| Provo District | 13,463 | 873 | 986 | 955 | 1,004 |
| Juab District | 2,705 | 171 | 202 | 187 | 217 |
| Tintic District | 262 | 10 | 16 | 18 | 16 |
| Wasatch District | 8,485 | 481 | 615 | 631 | 689 |
| Total | 152,618 | 10,119 | 10,579 | 10,908 | 11,640 |

[34] Assuming current ratios.

## Performance

Because successful early elementary education is foundational for literacy and numeracy skills, understanding student proficiency in these core subjects is vital. Recognizing areas for improvement is the first step; implementing appropriate instructional techniques and interventions can then follow. This analysis provides data and trends in academic achievement, continuing to focus on the percentage of students performing below, at, or above benchmark levels in reading and math.[35]

### Reading

In school year 2024-2025, 59.2 percent of grade 1 students throughout the state were reading at or above benchmark by the end of the year. In the service area, most districts exceed that percentage, with 70.9 percent in Alpine and 70.7 percent in Provo. The third district in Utah County—Nebo—saw 60.6 percent of its grade 1 students at or above benchmark. The percentage in Wasatch School District was between these three, coming in at 65.7 percent; Juab is the lone district in the service area that fared worse in this measurement, with only 53.5 percent of grade 1 students at or above reading benchmark.

*Table 11: Grade 1 Reading: Benchmark Attainment, Districts and State, 2025*

Grade 1 Reading: Benchmark Attainment, Districts and State, 2025

| | Well Below Benchmark | Below Benchmark | At Benchmark | Above Benchmark | Total Below Benchmark | Total At or Above Benchmark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alpine | 19.6 | 9.5 | 18.2 | 52.7 | 29.1 | 70.9 |
| Nebo | 27.9 | 11.5 | 18.7 | 41.9 | 39.4 | 60.6 |
| Provo | 22.3 | 7.1 | 17.8 | 52.9 | 29.4 | 70.7 |
| Juab | 32.1 | 14.4 | 20.3 | 33.2 | 46.5 | 53.5 |
| Wasatch | 26.4 | 8.0 | 18.2 | 47.5 | 34.4 | 65.7 |
| State | 21.7 | 19.1 | 12.8 | 46.4 | 40.8 | 59.2 |

School districts in the service area are on par or better than state averages when it comes to grade 2 student reading. Statewide, about two out of three grade two students—65 percent—are reading at or above benchmark measures; Utah County districts have higher percentages. Provo 73.0 percent) leads all districts in the service area, with Alpine (68.1) and Nebo (66.6) following. Juab and Wasatch are virtually tied, at 64.3 percent and 64.5 percent, respectively.

[35] All Grade 1 through 3 data is from Utah State Board of Education, Assessment Reports. https://schools.utah.gov/datastatistics/reports

*Table 12: Grade 2 Reading: Benchmark Attainment, Districts and State, 2025*

Grade 2 Reading: Benchmark Attainment, Districts and State, 2025

| | Well Below Benchmark | Below Benchmark | At Benchmark | Above Benchmark | Total Below Benchmark | Total At or Above Benchmark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alpine | 19.1 | 12.9 | 18.9 | 49.2 | 32.0 | 68.1 |
| Nebo | 21.3 | 12.1 | 18.3 | 48.3 | 33.4 | 66.6 |
| Provo | 19.6 | 7.4 | 12.5 | 60.5 | 27.0 | 73.0 |
| Juab | 25.1 | 10.6 | 28.5 | 35.8 | 35.7 | 64.3 |
| Wasatch | 21.8 | 13.6 | 22.4 | 42.1 | 35.4 | 64.5 |
| State | 20.3 | 14.7 | 17.3 | 47.7 | 35.0 | 65.0 |

By the time students in the three-county service area reach grade 3, a higher percentage are at or above the reading benchmark—and far exceeding statewide peers. Statewide, 61.3 percent of grade 3 students are at this level; in Provo School District, 75.3 percent are. And the other two school districts in Utah County are not far behind Provo: Alpine is at 72.1 percent, and Nebo is at 70.5 percent. Nearly 70 percent of Wasatch grade 3 students (69.5) and nearly two of three Juab grade 3 students (65.8 percent) meet or exceed the reading benchmark.

*Table 13: Grade 3 Reading: Benchmark Attainment, Districts and State, 2025*

Grade 3 Reading: Benchmark Attainment, Districts and State, 2025

| | Well Below Benchmark | Below Benchmark | At Benchmark | Above Benchmark | Total Below Benchmark | Total At or Above Benchmark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alpine | 18.6 | 9.4 | 21.9 | 50.2 | 28.0 | 72.1 |
| Nebo | 19.5 | 10.0 | 21.8 | 48.7 | 29.5 | 70.5 |
| Provo | 17.4 | 7.3 | 15.1 | 60.2 | 24.7 | 75.3 |
| Juab | 22.4 | 11.7 | 23.4 | 42.4 | 34.1 | 65.8 |
| Wasatch | 20.8 | 9.8 | 23.6 | 45.9 | 30.6 | 69.5 |
| State | 23.2 | 15.5 | 15.5 | 45.8 | 38.7 | 61.3 |

Shifting the view from students who are meeting or exceeding reading benchmarks to those who are not meeting benchmarks—and moving to a historical view—provides some additional insight.

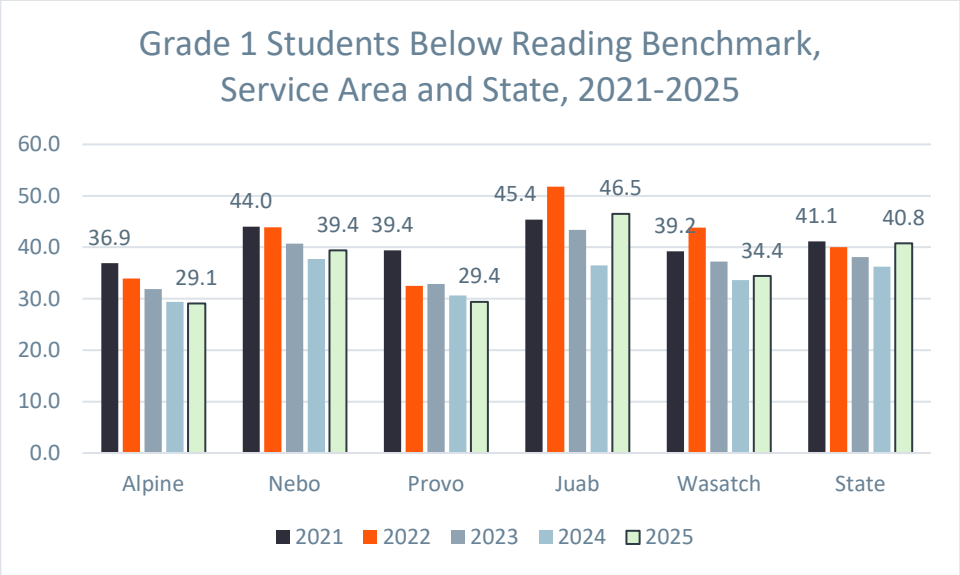


*Figure 12: Grade 1 Students Below Reading Benchmark, Service Area and State, 2021-2025*

In ELE's service area, only Juab School District has not seen considerable improvement in grade 1 from 2021 to 2025. In 2021, 45.4 percent of these students were not reaching reading benchmark; by 2025, that percentage increased slightly to 46.5 percent. Other districts in the service area—as well as the state as a whole—experienced decreases during the same period. However, Juab School District's 2025 figure may be an anomaly: it had dropped down to 36.5 percent in 2024.

Grade 2 students in the service area present a different picture. While the state's percentage of these students remained virtually unchanged from 2021 (35.9) to 2025 (35.0), only Wasatch School District saw an increase in students not reading at benchmark. Wasatch went from 32.3 percent in 2021 to 35.4 percent in 2025. Juab saw the greatest improvement—a 7.5 percentage point drop from 43.2 percent to 35.7 percent. Other school districts in the service area experienced decreases. Alpine School District (by far the largest in the service area) enjoyed a decrease from 36.9 percent in 2021 to 32.0 percent in 2025.

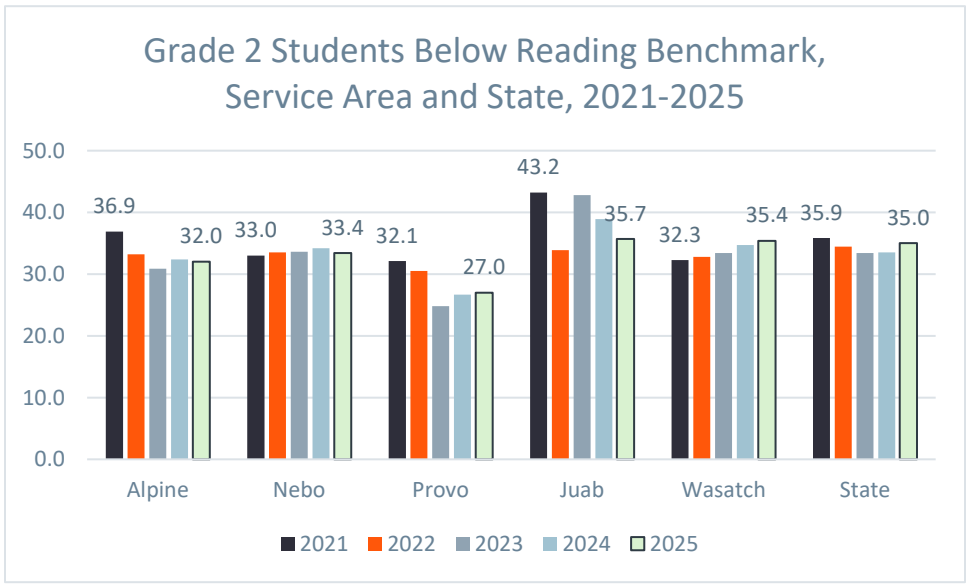


*Figure 13: Grade 2 Students Below Reading Benchmark, Service Area and State, 2021-2025*

Grade 3 students in ELE's service area are generally performing much better than their statewide peers. Between 2021 and 2025, the percentage of statewide grade 3 students not reaching reading benchmarks increased from 31.0 to 38.7. Alpine School District, along with Provo, Juab, and Wasatch, experienced decreases. Alpine dropped from 30.2 to 28.0, while Provo declined from 27.6 to 24.7 and Wasatch decreased from 32.6 to 30.6. Juab's decrease from 39.7 to 34.1 is considerable. Only Nebo School District did not see improvement, going from 27.9 to 29.5.

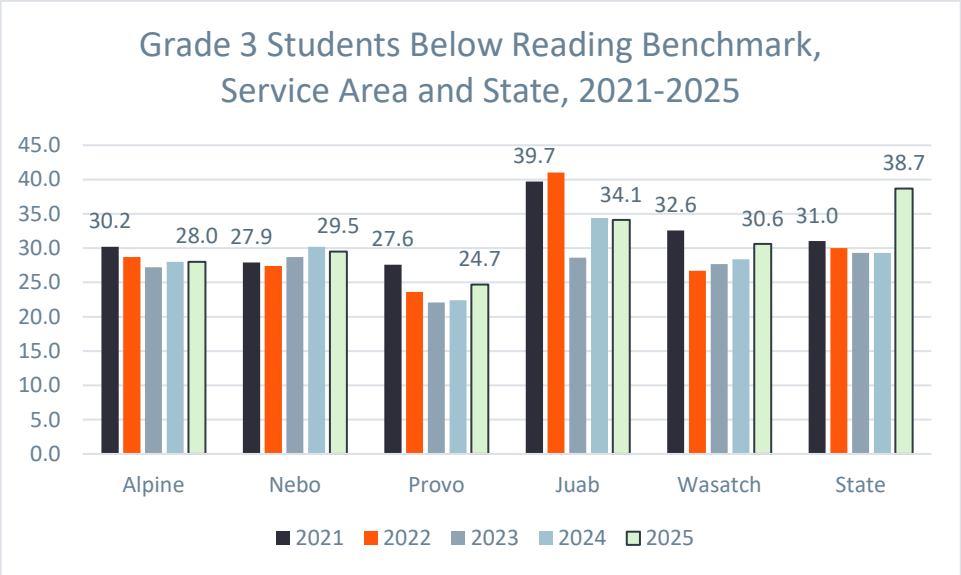


*Figure 14: Grade 3 Students Below Reading Benchmark, Service Area and State, 2021-2025*

## Math

Mathematics curriculum and instruction for grade 1, 2, and 3 students is critical for ongoing academic success. Studies show that a strong foundation in mathematics during these early years is essential for developing problem-solving skills, logical reasoning, and confidence in academic pursuits.[36]

In 2025, the area's smaller school districts struggled to match state numbers in grade 1 the benchmark. Statewide, 59.2 percent achieved the benchmark; in Provo, 61.6 percent did. Alpine (59.7) was also near the state number, but Nebo (52.7), Juab (52.4), and Wasatch (50.2) trailed statewide peers.

*Table 14: Grade 1 Math: Benchmark Attainment, Districts and State, 2025*

Grade 1 Math: Benchmark Attainment, Districts and State, 2025

| | Well Below Benchmark | Below Benchmark | At Benchmark | Above Benchmark | Total Below Benchmark | Total At or Above Benchmark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alpine | 21.3 | 19.0 | 12.6 | 47.1 | 40.3 | 59.7 |
| Nebo | 24.6 | 22.7 | 14.7 | 38.0 | 47.3 | 52.7 |
| Provo | 20.6 | 17.8 | 11.8 | 49.8 | 38.4 | 61.6 |
| Juab | 27.3 | 20.3 | 13.4 | 39.0 | 47.6 | 52.4 |
| Wasatch | 25.6 | 24.2 | 14.6 | 35.6 | 49.8 | 50.2 |
| State | 21.7 | 19.1 | 12.8 | 46.4 | 40.8 | 59.2 |

[36] Claessens, A., & Engel, M. (2013). How Important is Where you Start? Early Mathematics Knowledge and Later School Success. *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education,* 115, 1 - 29. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811311500603. See also Ryan, V., Fitzmaurice, O., & O'Donoghue, J. (2021). A study of academic achievement in mathematics after the transition from primary to secondary education. *SN Social Sciences,* 1. https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-021-00177-8.

Grade 2 students in Provo School District did much better than the statewide figure—72.5 percent versus the state's 65.0 percent)—and both Alpine (69.7) and Juab (68.1) performed above state figures. Nebo (63.3) and Wasatch (54.6) were below the state's percentage.

*Table 15: Grade 2 Math: Benchmark Attainment, Districts and State, 2025*

Grade 2 Math: Benchmark Attainment, Districts and State, 2025

| | Well Below Benchmark | Below Benchmark | At Benchmark | Above Benchmark | Total Below Benchmark | Total At or Above Benchmark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alpine | 16.5 | 13.8 | 16.7 | 53.0 | 30.3 | 69.7 |
| Nebo | 20.0 | 16.8 | 18.0 | 45.3 | 36.8 | 63.3 |
| Provo | 15.2 | 12.3 | 19.0 | 53.5 | 27.5 | 72.5 |
| Juab | 15.1 | 16.8 | 15.6 | 52.5 | 31.9 | 68.1 |
| Wasatch | 25.2 | 20.3 | 19.5 | 35.1 | 45.5 | 54.6 |
| State | 20.3 | 14.7 | 17.3 | 47.7 | 35.0 | 65.0 |

Juab's grade 3 students excel in math benchmark attainment, with 81.0 percent meeting or exceeding the standard (compared to 61.3 percent statewide). Provo (67.0) and Alpine (64.9) also had more students succeeding than state peers; Nebo (58.0) and Wasatch (55.8) fell behind.

*Table 16: Grade 3 Math: Benchmark Attainment, Districts and State, 2025*

Grade 3 Math: Benchmark Attainment, Districts and State, 2025

| | Well Below Benchmark | Below Benchmark | At Benchmark | Above Benchmark | Total Below Benchmark | Total At or Above Benchmark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alpine | 19.5 | 15.6 | 15.9 | 49.0 | 35.1 | 64.9 |
| Nebo | 23.2 | 18.8 | 17.5 | 40.5 | 42.0 | 58.0 |
| Provo | 20.7 | 12.4 | 15.9 | 51.1 | 33.1 | 67.0 |
| Juab | 9.8 | 9.3 | 11.7 | 69.3 | 19.1 | 81.0 |
| Wasatch | 25.8 | 18.5 | 17.8 | 38.0 | 44.3 | 55.8 |
| State | 23.2 | 15.5 | 15.5 | 45.8 | 38.7 | 61.3 |

Historically, students in the area's grade 1 districts are making improvement since 2022.[37] Over the past four years, grade 1 students not meeting the mathematics benchmark have decreased—both in individual districts in the service area as well as statewide. The state figure dropped from 50.1 percent in 2021 to 40.8 percent in 2025. Alpine followed a very similar path, dropping every year since 2021's 50.6 percent—and reaching 40.3 percent in 2025. All four other school districts in the ELE service area have likewise seen decreases in the percent of grade 1 students not meeting mathematics benchmark over the four-year period; however, Provo (52.2 in 2021), Wasatch (52.6 percent in 2021), and Juab (58.2 percent in 2021) have also experienced increases during the period.

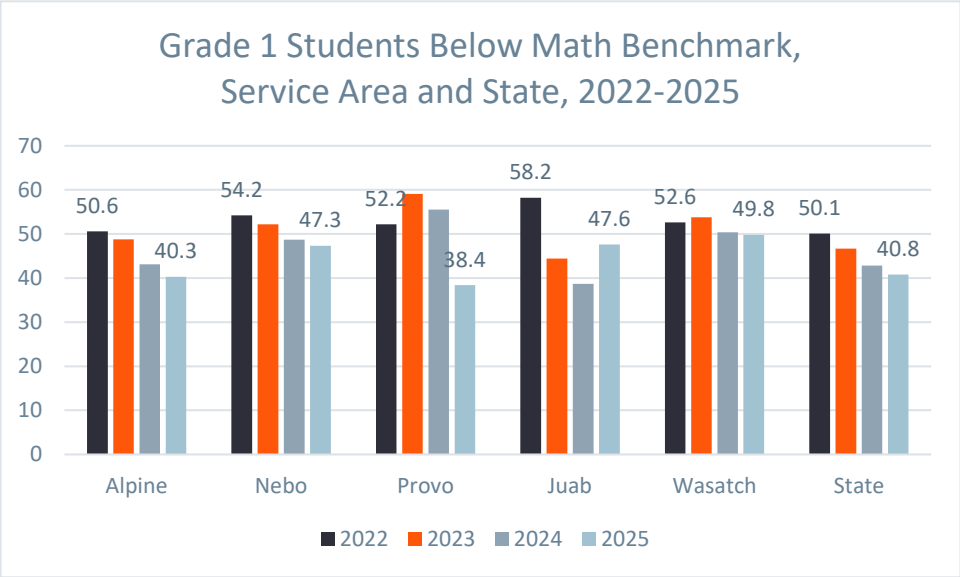


*Figure 15:Grade 1 Students Below Math Benchmark, Service Area and State, 2022-2025*

Grade 2 students are seeing similar improvements. Statewide, 47.8 percent of students did not meet the math benchmark in 2021; by 2025, that figure had dropped to 35.0 percent. Juab experienced the sharpest decline, dropping from 59.1 percent to 31.9 percent—although the 2025 figure is up from 2024's 24.1 percent. Alpine decreased from 50.6 percent to 30.3 percent, and Nebo dropped nearly 16 percentage points to 36.8 percent. Provo (54.0 percent to 27.5 percent) and Wasatch (51.1 percent to 45.5 percent) also experienced improvement.

[37] Data prior to 2022 are not available because the Utah State Board of Education did not begin utilizing Acadience mathematics benchmark until the 2021-2022 school year.

Grade 3 students throughout the state are improving in math as well. The state's figure of these students who did not meet the math benchmark decreased from 45.5 percent in 2021 to 38.7 percent in 2025. In the service area, Juab students improved significantly over the four-year period, dropping from 46.2 percent in 2021 to 19.1 percent in 2025—a 58.7 percent decrease. Alpine (44.4 to 35.1), Nebo (43.9 to 42.0), Provo (49.5 to 33.1) also saw improvement, although it is not nearly as dramatic as Juab's. Only Wasatch (39.9 to 44.3) experienced an increase in the percentage of grade 3 students not meeting the math benchmark.

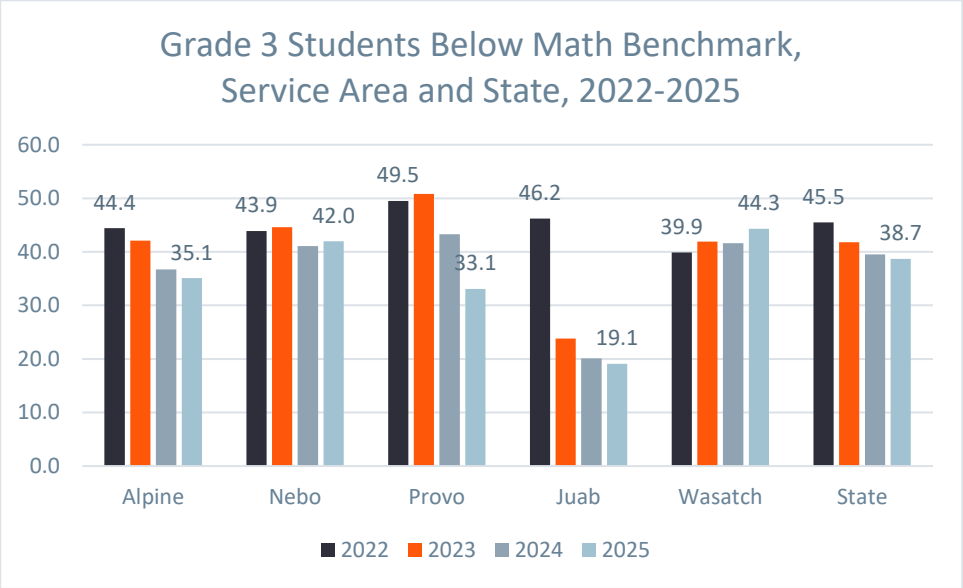


*Figure 16: Grade 3 Students Below Math Benchmark, Service Area and State, 2022-2025*

# Secondary Education

Secondary education in the Early Learning Essentials service area is generally known to be strong. Local middle and senior high schools provide students with knowledge and skills for postsecondary training, successful careers, and productive lives. Alpine School District (the largest in the state, with about 78,000 students) is home to 14 junior high schools and 11 high schools. (Alpine will split into three districts in July 2027). Nebo School District (about 42,000 students) operates five junior high schools and six high schools. Provo City School District, with approximately 17,800 students, has two traditional high schools, an alternative high school, and two middle schools. Juab School District (roughly 2,500 students) secondary students attend Juab Junior High and Juab High in Nephi. Wasatch School District, with its nine schools (including Wasatch High) is home to about 9,000 students. The district was named the Best of State for Educational Institutions in 2025.[38]

## Graduation, GED, and Other Completer Rates

In measuring and assessing secondary education success, it is critical to understand the four terms often reported: cohort graduation rate, cohort dropout rate, cohort other completer rate, and cohort continuing student rate.[39]

[38] Hatcher, C., & Hatcher, C. (2025, May 2). *Wasatch School District wins Best of State award.* Park Record. https://www.parkrecord.com/2025/04/29/wasatch-school-district-wins-best-of-state-award

[39] Data in this section from Utah State Board of Education, Reports. https://schools.utah.gov/datastatistics/reports

Cohort. The following measures are for cohorts—students entering grade 9 in a given school year plus any transfers into the public school system minus any transfers out of the public school system.

Cohort Graduation Rate. This is the measure of students who earn a standard high school diploma by the end of the expected senior year. It is calculated as the number of graduates divided by the total cohort size.

Cohort Dropout Rate. The cohort dropout rate is the percentage of students in the cohort who exit the public education system without completing high school requirements. It includes students who withdraw, drop out, are expelled, or fail to graduate within the four-year timeframe. Note that this includes students who take longer to earn a diploma than the standard four years. It is computed as the number of dropouts divided by the total cohort size.

Cohort Other Completer Rate. Other completers are those students who meet high school requirements through non-standard pathways (such as earning a General Education Development (GED) certificate, receiving a Certificate of Completion, or—for students with disabilities participating in the Utah Alternate Assessment—achieving an approved alternative outcome). The rate is calculated as the number of other completers divided by the total cohort size.

Cohort Continuing Student Rate. Continuing students are those who are still enrolled in public schools beyond the typical four-year period; these students are still pursuing an education, and may complete their high school education. Continuing students are often those with disabilities (eligible for extended enrollment up to age 22) or students who transfer to higher education or the Utah College of Applied Technology (UCAT) while still working toward high school graduation. The figure is calculated as the number of continuing students divided by the total cohort size.

Note that these four rates are mutually exclusive and sum to 100 percent of the cohort.

In school year 2023-2024 (the latest year for which data is available), graduation rates in the service area were generally above the state rate, with the exception of Provo. Statewide, 88.8 percent of the 2024 cohort graduated, compared to 87.1 percent in Provo. Juab leads the other school districts in ELE's service area, at 96.8 percent of its 221-member cohort graduating. Wasatch (96.5 percent) is just behind Juab, while Nebo (94.3) and Alpine (91.4) are trailing.

The statewide dropout rate for the latest cohort is 9.4 percent. In Provo, 10.3 percent of its 1,081 cohort members dropped out, while only 2.3 percent of Juab's and 3.3 percent of Wasatch's dropped out. Nebo experienced a 4.8 percent dropout rate and Alpine saw 6.4 percent.

*Table 17: 2024 Cohort Count, Graduation Rate, Dropout Rate, Other Completer Rate, Continuing Student Rate*

| 2024 Cohort County, Graduation Rate, Dropout Rate, Other Completer Rate, Continuing Student Rate | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Cohort Count | Graduation Rate | Dropout Rate | Other Completer Rate | Continuing Student Rate |
| Alpine | 6,789 | 91.4 | 6.4 | < 1 | 1.2 |
| Nebo | 2,861 | 94.3 | 4.8 | < 1 | < 1 |
| Provo | 1,081 | 87.1 | 10.3 | 2.3 | < 1 |
| Juab | 221 | 96.8 | 2.3 | < 2 | < 2 |
| Wasatch | 598 | 96.5 | 3.3 | < 1 | < 1 |
| State | 53,471 | 88.8 | 9.4 | 1.1 | < 1 |

2023 figures are similar, with 88.3 percent of statewide students graduating, while 98.0 percent in Juab graduated. Provo was only slightly lower than the state figure, coming in at 88.1 percent. Provo's dropout rate was 10.0 percent in 2023, with Nebo (6.9) and Alpine (6.5) having the next highest rates. Less than two percent of Juab's 2023 cohort dropped out of high school.

*Table 18: 2023 Cohort Count, Graduation Rate, Dropout Rate, Other Completer Rate, Continuing Student Rate*

| 2023 Cohort County, Graduation Rate, Dropout Rate, Other Completer Rate, Continuing Student Rate | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Cohort Count | Graduation Rate | Dropout Rate | Other Completer Rate | Continuing Student Rate |
| Alpine | 6,621 | 91.0 | 6.5 | 1.2 | 1.2 |
| Nebo | 2,775 | 92.5 | 6.9 | < 1 | < 1 |
| Provo | 1,095 | 88.1 | 10.0 | 1.4 | < 1 |
| Juab | 185 | 98.0 | < 2 | < 2 | < 2 |
| Wasatch | 623 | 93.9 | 5.8 | < 1 | < 1 |
| State | 52,066 | 88.3 | 9.8 | 1.1 | < 1 |

In 2022, the state's graduation rate was slightly lower than in 2023, at 88.2 percent. Provo's—although it was lowest in the ELE service area, was above the state rate, at 90.5 percent. Juab led all districts in the area, at 95.9 percent.

*Table 19: 2022 Cohort Count, Graduation Rate, Dropout Rate, Other Completer Rate, Continuing Student Rate*

| 2022 Cohort County, Graduation Rate, Dropout Rate, Other Completer Rate, Continuing Student Rate | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Cohort Count | Graduation Rate | Dropout Rate | Other Completer Rate | Continuing Student Rate |
| Alpine | 6,563 | 90.4 | 7.8 | < 1 | 1.1 |
| Nebo | 2,580 | 92.7 | 5.9 | < 1 | 1.0 |
| Provo | 1,116 | 90.5 | 7.2 | 1.8 | < 1 |
| Juab | 171 | 95.9 | 3.5 | < 2 | < 2 |
| Wasatch | 634 | 93.2 | 5.5 | < 1 | < 1 |
| State | 51,506 | 88.2 | 9.9 | < 1 | < 1 |

2021's cohort experienced slightly different figures. Statewide, 88.1 percent graduated from high school, while 10.0 percent dropped out. However, Wasatch had the lowest graduation rate (89.7) and the highest dropout rate (8.8) of any district in ELE's service area.

*Table 20: 2021 Cohort Count, Graduation Rate, Dropout Rate, Other Completer Rate, Continuing Student Rate*

| 2021 Cohort Count, Graduation Rate, Dropout Rate, Other Completer Rate, Continuing Student Rate | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Cohort Count | Graduation Rate | Dropout Rate | Other Completer Rate | Continuing Student Rate |
| Alpine | 6,408 | 91.3 | 6.4 | < 1 | 1.5 |
| Nebo | 2,659 | 93.6 | 5.0 | < 1 | 1.1 |
| Provo | 1,137 | 90.9 | 7.1 | 1.7 | < 1 |
| Juab | 197 | 98.0 | < 2 | < 2 | < 2 |
| Wasatch | 556 | 89.7 | 8.8 | < 1 | < 1 |
| State | 50,661 | 88.1 | 10.0 | < 1 | 1.2 |

In 2020, Juab had the highest graduation rate of any district in the service area, at 98.2. Nebo (94.2), Alpine (93.0), Wasatch (89.6), and Provo (89.3) followed. The state graduation rate was 88.2. Wasatch led the area with the highest dropout rate in 2020, at 9.3.

*Table 21: 2020 Cohort Count, Graduation Rate, Dropout Rate, Other Completer Rate, Continuing Student Rate*

| 2020 Cohort Count, Graduation Rate, Dropout Rate, Other Completer Rate, Continuing Student Rate | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Cohort Count | Graduation Rate | Dropout Rate | Other Completer Rate | Continuing Student Rate |
| Alpine | 6,056 | 93.0 | 5.2 | < 1 | 1.1 |
| Nebo | 2,554 | 94.2 | 4.5 | < 1 | 1.1 |
| Provo | 1,060 | 89.3 | 8.6 | 1.5 | < 1 |
| Juab | 171 | 98.2 | < 2 | < 2 | < 2 |
| Wasatch | 549 | 89.6 | 9.3 | < 1 | < 1 |
| State | 49,197 | 88.2 | 10.0 | < 1 | 1.3 |

Visualizing historical trends by district is helpful. Juab consistently experiences the highest graduation rates in the service area, and are eight to 10 percentage points higher than statewide figures. Over the five-year period, Alpine (93.0 in 2020 to 91.4 in 2024) and Provo (89.3 to 87.1) both experienced decreases in the graduation rate. Nebo (94.2 to 94.3) and Wasatch (89.6 to 96.5) saw increases. Statewide, the figure remained nearly constant all five years

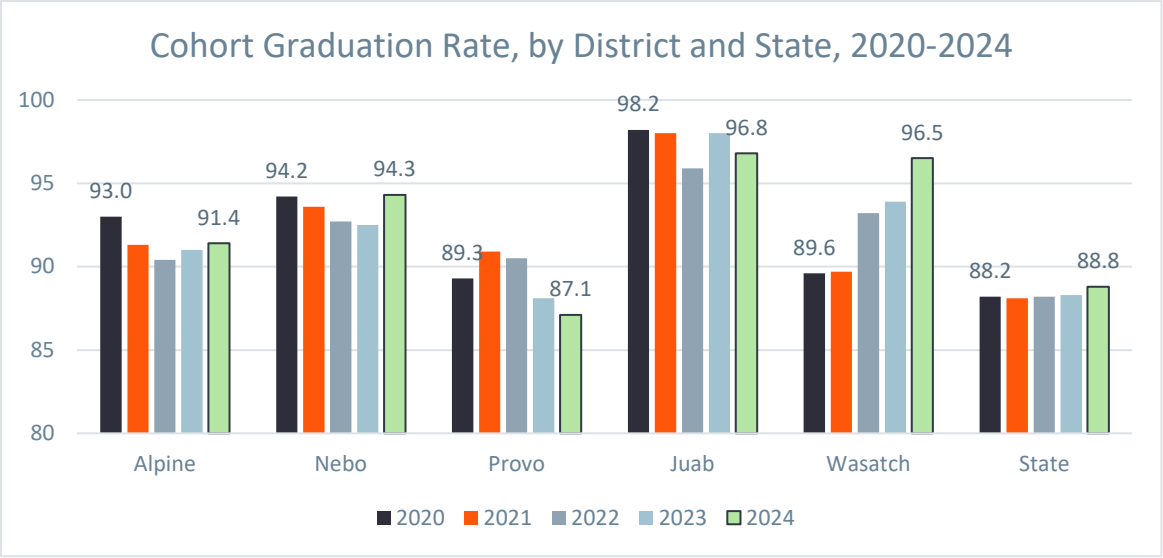


*Figure 18: Cohort Graduation Rate, by District and State, 2020-2024*

While the state cohort dropout rate has declined—albeit only slightly—nearly every year since 2020, Alpine's, Nebo's, Provo's, and Juab's rates have each increased since 2020. The highest cohort dropout rate in Alpine over the five-year period was in 2022, when it reached 7.8 percent. It is now at 6.4 percent. In Nebo, the high was in 2023, at 6.9 percent; as of 2024, it was down to 4.8 percent. Provo's highest level was in 2024, when it reached 10.3 percent. Juab was less than 2 percent (so the exact figure was not reported due to small cohort size and personally identifying information); in 2024, it was up to 2.3 percent. And Wasatch's highest year was 2020, when it was at 9.3 percent—this compares with only 3.3 percent in 2024.

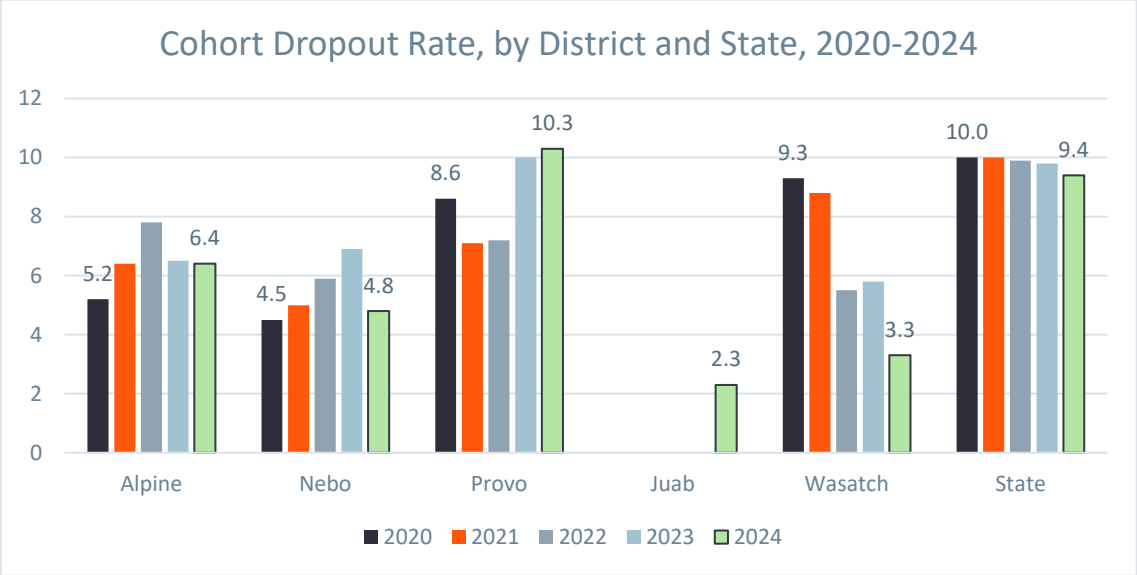


*Figure 17: Cohort Dropout Rate, by District and State, 2020-2024*

# Foster Care

As of 28 July 2025, there were between 69 and 89 children age 0 to 4 years in foster care in Early Learning Essentials' service area. The majority—69—were in Utah County; fewer than 11 were in each of Juab and Wasatch Counties.[40]

*Table 22: Children in Foster Care, By Age, July 2025*

| Children in Foster Care, By Age, July 2025 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Age (Years) | | | | | |
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Total |
| Utah | 12 | 15 | 12 | 11 | 19 | 69 |
| Juab | <11 | 0 | <11 | <11 | 0 | <31 |
| Wasatch | <11 | <11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | <21 |
| Total (range) | 12-32 | 16-26 | 12-22 | 11-21 | 19 | 69-119 |

# Children Experiencing Homelessness

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, first enacted in 1987 and reauthorized under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, is a federal law that ensures children and youth experiencing homelessness have access to public education. "Homeless" is defined broadly in the statute: those in shelters, motels, doubled up with others, or awaiting foster care. In Early Learning Essentials' service area, data on homeless students is collected through local school districts by designated homeless liaisons. These liaisons identify eligible students through referrals from schools, community agencies, and families; the data is then reported annually to the Utah State Board of Education. In addition to reporting the number of homeless children, the state also reports Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) data also reported in an effort to help contextualize homelessness rates within broader poverty trends.

In the service area, there are 974 homeless children reported through the McKinney-Vento homeless liaisons. There are 9,679 children age 5 to 17 living in poverty.[41]

*Table 23: McKinney-Vento Homeless Count; SAIPE Children in Poverty Count and Number, 2024*

| McKinney-Vento Homeless Count; SAIPE Children in Poverty Count and Number, 2024 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Number Homeless Children | Children 5-17 in Poverty | Small Area Income and Poverty Estimate (SAIPE) |
| Alpine | 207 | 5,276 | 5.1 |
| Nebo | 353 | 2,258 | 5.5 |
| Provo | 334 | 1,664 | 9.9 |
| Juab | n/a | 34 | 22.8 |
| Wasatch | 80 | 447 | 5.3 |
| State | 11,897 | - | - |

[40] Division of Child and Family Services, Personal Communication, 8 August 2025
[41] EdFacts File Specifications 118, 170, and U.S. Census Bureau SAIPE Program