Resources and additional information on the Learner Continuum can be found on the last page of this state case study. Please contact PathwaysMatter@ExcelinEd.org for questions about this state case study or about the policy continuum in your state.
### LEARNER PATHWAYS

*Ensure vertical alignment to workforce needs, robust funding, collaboration across agencies and equitable access for all students.*

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<th>K–12</th>
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<td>HIGH-QUALITY CTE PROGRAMS</td>
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<td>TARGETED CTE PROGRAM FUNDING</td>
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<td>STATE CROSS-AGENCY SHARED PRIORITIES</td>
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#### HIGH-QUALITY CTE PROGRAMS

Align all CTE programs with high-demand, high-skill and high-wage occupations that reflect the state’s economic and workforce priorities. Ensure that these programs feature the academic and technical skills and knowledge learners will need to be successful.

#### TARGETED CTE PROGRAM FUNDING

Dedicate state funding for CTE programs—but only if they are aligned to high-demand, high-skill and high-wage occupations. Target specific funds for pathway completion and demonstrated learner outcomes.

#### RETURN ON INVESTMENT ANALYSIS

Conduct a biennial return on investment (ROI) analysis of CTE programs to assess whether all learners have access to high-demand, high-skill and high-wage pathways. Collect school- and student-level data to evaluate outcomes of CTE programs against established shared metrics for quality and equity.

#### STATE CROSS-AGENCY SHARED PRIORITIES

Establish shared priorities and collective accountability across state agencies and education systems for learner pathway development, supports and success. Ensure that business and industry have a seat at the table and can lead discussions related to demand and training requirements.
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

There is no formal legislation that governs the alignment of K–12 or postsecondary CTE programs of study or courses. Utah does promote Utah Career Pathways, which are designed to reflect the national industry Career Cluster® sectors. This promotion includes the production of one-page Career Pathway charts, showing the vertical alignment of secondary CTE programs with postsecondary programs/credentials available in the Utah higher education systems. Each chart also identifies CTE early postsecondary credit courses (concurrent courses). The Utah System of Higher Education qualifies its institutions’ roles and missions through the lens of CTE, as well as awarded credentials. This is intended to reflect promoted alignment vertically and laterally at the postsecondary level and highlights both system policy and legislated policy.

Utah’s program advisory committees include business partners at the state and local levels. In addition, both secondary and postsecondary partner with Utah’s Office of Economic Development to align the governor’s priorities with significant industry partner input and involvement. K–12 utilizes the Industry Standards Rating Tool through a third-party vendor, which enables businesses to provide input on courses, programs of study, certifications and work-based learning. The information gathered through this tool is used to develop and update programs on an ongoing basis.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Beyond showing alignment through the Career Pathway charts, Utah can further strengthen secondary/postsecondary systems alignment by enacting state policies that reinforce the Perkins V definition for a program of study by clearly articulating expectations and a definition of vertically aligned CTE pathways between secondary and postsecondary.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Delaware – Career and Technical Education Programs
- Tennessee – Career and Technical Education Programs
- Texas – Program of Study Initiative

RESOURCES

- UT Career Pathway Charts

POLICIES

- UT Code § 53B, Systems
- UT System of Higher Education 53B-1-101.5, Institutional Roles and Missions
KEY POLICY

Targeted CTE Program Funding

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
Utah provides weighted funding for CTE based on the regular weighted pupil unit, including incentives to provide CTE in all 41 districts plus charter schools. Funding is used to pay for the added costs of instruction for CTE programs. This legislative funding is often referred to as the “CTE add-on.” Local funding in the school districts is also used to support CTE programs. Additional state funds can go toward instruction, work-based learning, advising, career technical student organizations and competency skill certification.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Utah can target K–12 funding to further incentivize local education agencies in their development and implementation of high-quality, aligned programs of study. This can include funds to support the startup and sustainment of high-quality, aligned programs and incentive funds for students who complete a high-quality, aligned program of study or obtain aligned industry credentials.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Indiana – Funding Methodology
- Ohio – Innovative Workforce Incentive Program
- Texas – House Bill 3

RESOURCES
- Utah State CTE Funding

POLICIES
- UT Admin Code R277-911. Secondary CTE Disbursement of Funds
return on Investment Analysis

states policy analysis
Utah does not appear to have a formal statute or agency policy/initiative in place to address equitable access to high-quality CTE programs of study that reflect high-demand, high-skill, high-wage (H3) occupations/industries.

opportunity to strengthen
Utah can conduct a thorough audit to (1) ensure that existing CTE programs of study are aligned with workforce needs, informed by labor market demand, linked to occupations that are middle- to high-wage, and vertically aligned to postsecondary programs; (2) know where H3 CTE programs are offered across all recognized local education agencies; and (3) use already collected student data to further analyze student access, participation and completion data by student groups to determine potential inequities. ExcelinEd’s Auditing a State Career and Technical Education Program for Quality playbook provides a roadmap for developing and implementing an audit.

promising examples from other states
- Colorado – Return on Investment Reports
- Florida – Executive Order 19-31 and House Bill 7071
  (NOTE: While promising, both could be strengthened by more focused analyses on equity and quality of offerings.)

resources
N/A

policies
N/A
KEY POLICY

State Cross-Agency Shared Priorities

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

CTE secondary and postsecondary participate in the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) through three committees: the Career Pathways Committee, the Youth Committee and the Apprenticeship Committee. The primary goals of the SWDB committees are to support the alignment and collaboration of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act core and required partners. Utah also has the Talent Ready Utah Board, a cross-agency collaboration with representatives from K–12, postsecondary, the Governor’s Office, industry, the Legislature and the Department of Workforce Services. The goal of the Talent Ready Utah Board is to “review and develop metrics to measure the progress, performance, effectiveness, and scope of any state operation, activity, program, or service that primarily involves employment training or placement.”

In 2021, HB 348 formed the Unified Economic Opportunity Commission, chaired by Governor Cox with cross-sector, business, and legislative representation. The Commission is tasked with developing a 10-year statewide economic opportunity strategy across education, training, and workforce development.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Promoting strong coordination across all state agencies around economic and workforce priorities also promotes shared visioning, agency policies and programs. Utah can create a statewide cross-agency task force or committee to develop shared priorities, goals and metrics. ExcelinEd’s Building Cross-Sector Partnerships to Support Career and Technical Education Pathways resource provides a step-by-step process for building cross-agency shared priorities.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Delaware – Advisory Council on Career and Technical Education (DACCTE)
- Indiana – Governor’s Workforce Cabinet
- Washington – Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

RESOURCES

- Utah State Workforce Development Board
- Utah Perkins V State Plan
- Talent Ready Utah
- Unified Economic Opportunity Commission

POLICIES

- HB348 Economic Development Amendments
**POSTSECONDARY ACCELERATION**

Streamline postsecondary learning and empower high school students to earn credit to reduce the time required to earn postsecondary degrees.

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<td><strong>REMEDIATION</strong></td>
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**COLLEGE ACCELERATION**
Provide and incentivize a range of options for learners to earn college credit while in high school. Ensure that all learners have access and financial support to accelerate their journey to a postsecondary credential.

**CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING AND CREDENTIALS**
Implement a consistent state policy for awarding postsecondary program or elective credit for prior learning, work experience and earned industry credentials.

**COLLEGE ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS**
Establish statewide articulation agreements to ensure college credits earned in K–12 or at one institution transfer and count toward a degree at another. Minimize or eliminate credit loss and misalignment for transitioning learners.

**REMEDIATION**
Replace outdated developmental and remedial education with college credit bearing options paired with intensive supports. Adopt co-requisite remediation programs or offer remediation to learners before they graduate high school.
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Utah promotes concurrent secondary/postsecondary coursework, as well as Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate, for credit. The state recognizes many CTE-related courses as eligible for concurrent credit. In addition, the state supports several early college high schools (ECHSs). The concurrent enrollment state appropriation is allocated to participating local education agencies (LEAs) and the State Board of Regents. The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) allocates the funding in proportion to the number of credit hours earned for courses taken based on who primarily bears the cost of instruction. When the LEA primarily bears the cost of instruction, USBE distributes 60 percent of the funds to LEAs and 40 percent to the State Board of Regents. When an institution of higher education primarily bears the cost of instruction, USBE distributes 40 percent of the money to LEAs and 60 percent to the State Board of Regents.

In 2020 Utah passed HB 338 which expanded the PRIME pilot program to create streamlined systems for students to earn concurrent enrollment CTE credits while in high school, with a focus on increasing access for underrepresented students. Unfortunately, the program was not funded due to budget constraints with COVID-19 but will hopefully be funded in the next legislative session.

Utah has six ECHSs operating in partnership with seven of the state’s higher education colleges and universities. These are public charter high schools. ECHS students can graduate from high school with an associate degree. The high school pays the participating student’s college tuition as part of their public education. Students are selected by a lottery system. Students enter the schools in grades 9, 10 or 11, depending on the school. Students must meet the requirements for concurrent enrollment and early college classes established by the colleges and universities.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Utah can continue the expansion of college acceleration opportunities for students by promoting a diverse portfolio of options for all learners. This approach can reflect the expansion of awarded credit for advanced coursework completion, AP exams and earned advanced-level industry certifications. Additionally, the state can require all high schools to offer a minimum number of advanced-level college acceleration courses and provide supplemental funding so all advanced-level offerings can be accessed and completed at no cost to the student. To support equitable access for all students, Utah can implement an automatic advanced-level course enrollment policy for students who score certain levels on their end-of-course assessments or ACTs that also includes additional measures for eligibility.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Florida – [High School Acceleration Programs](#) and [Statewide Agreements on Credit](#)
- Idaho – [Advanced Opportunities Funding](#)
- Louisiana – [TOPS-Tech Early Start Program](#)
- North Carolina – [Automatic Enrollment](#)

RESOURCES

- ECHSs
- Concurrent Courses
- PRIME Pilot Program

POLICIES

- [UT System of Higher Education R165](#). Concurrent Enrollment
- [USBE R277](#). Early College Programs and Funding
- [HB 338](#). CTE Concurrent Enrollment
Utah

**KEY POLICY**

Credit for Prior Learning and Credentials

**STATE POLICY ANALYSIS**

The Utah System of Higher Education promotes a robust prior learning assessment policy and program. The policy includes competency-based learning, military service, nationally recognized standardized exams, state-approved “faculty-determined” assessments and industry-sector assessments. Credit earned through prior learning will apply toward appropriate general education, degree or certificate requirements.

**OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN**

Utah can continue to collect and analyze data on credit for prior learning credit attainment to ensure the policies are having their intended outcomes and are equitable in their support.

**PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES**

- Colorado – Prior Learning Assessment Credit Policy
- Kentucky – Prior Learning Initiative
- Ohio – Military Strategic Implementation Team

**RESOURCES**

- UT Prior Learning Assessment Program

**POLICIES**

- UT System of Higher Education R472. Credit for Prior Learning
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

The Utah State Board of Education publicizes formalized agreements that are in place that are specific to general academic and CTE-related courses at the secondary level and their acceptance at select institutions at the postsecondary level. They define an articulation agreement to mean the following: “Articulation agreements provide a strategy for facilitating the transfer of credits and non-credits between a high school and a postsecondary institution, or between two postsecondary institutions to define the specific courses that may be taken at one institution and will be accepted for credit at the second.”

The Utah System of Higher Education qualifies its institutions’ approach to transfer articulation agreements through its roles and missions document. This is intended to reflect promoted alignment vertically and laterally at the postsecondary level. The system also promotes a user guide on transfer articulation across Utah system institutions.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Variations can still exist across postsecondary institutions in requirements for transfer. Streamlining the system statewide can help to make the process easier for students to navigate and avoid losing time and courses that have already been completed.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Florida – Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements
- Indiana – Core Transfer Library
- Kentucky – Transfer Articulation Agreements

RESOURCES

- Articulation Agreements Relating to CTE
- Utah Transfer Guide

POLICIES

- UT System of Higher Education 53B-1-101.5, Institutional Roles and Missions
Remediation

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
There appears to be no concerted policy or cross-agency program designed to address and mitigate high school and/or entering postsecondary student remediation in core academic areas. Thresholds have been identified for standardized tests (e.g., ACT) that determine a student’s qualification for placement in a remedial course. Local education agencies (LEAs) are required to provide remediation courses to secondary students who do not meet competency levels in English, mathematics, science or social studies. LEAs are also permitted to charge a fee for participation in these courses. LEAs may also make credit recovery courses available to secondary students who need to repeat or retake a course to graduate.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Utah can implement co-requisite remediation whereby secondary and postsecondary students are concurrently enrolled in a remedial course and a credit bearing course.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
• Georgia – Complete College Georgia
• North Carolina – Multiple Measures of Placement Policy
• Tennessee – Co-Requisite Remediation and Seamless Alignment and Integrated Learning Support (SAILS)

RESOURCES
N/A

POLICIES
N/A
**POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT**

*Reduce barriers—such as funding, lack of alignment and missed opportunities—to help more students attain postsecondary credentials.*

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<td>STACKABLE DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS</td>
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**REVERSE TRANSFER CREDENTIALS**
Establish a statewide policy to allow students to earn an associate degree while continuing to work toward a bachelor’s degree. Ensure two-year and four-year college credits can be combined toward the credential.

**LAST DOLLAR/LAST MILE FINANCIAL AID**
Provide dedicated state financial aid to qualifying learners that fills in gaps in federal assistance (last dollar) and promotes attainment for learners just shy of completing a degree (last mile).

**OUTCOMES-BASED FUNDING**
Transition postsecondary funding models from those based on learner enrollment to ones based on learner outcomes. Dedicate more funding to programs and institutions that show demonstrated success in meeting success metrics such as job placement and long-term wage earnings.

**STACKABLE DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS**
Define and promote a combination of industry and academic credentials that reflect articulated pathways to advanced learning and employment. Ensure that postsecondary credential programs are widely accessible to all learners and reflect value in the labor market.
Reverse Transfer Credentials

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
Reverse transfer options for students are promoted through institutional partnerships rather than stated policy by the Utah System of Higher Education. There are no legislative or system policies in place.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Developing and implementing a reverse transfer policy across the Utah System of Higher Education can help ensure that students are able to understand and earn appropriate degrees that are clearly delineated.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Colorado – Reverse Transfer Process
- Florida – Reverse Transfer Statewide Articulation Agreements
- Texas – Reverse Transfer Process

RESOURCES
- What is “Reverse Transfer” and a “Stackable Credential”?  
- Stackable Credentials and Reverse Transfer Information Brief 
- Utah Transfer Guide

POLICIES
N/A
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
The University of Utah promotes a For Utah Scholarship that combines federal, state and university funds to cover tuition and fees for academically qualified, Pell Grant-eligible first-time freshmen who are Utah residents. Students who are eligible can attend with no tuition or fees. The Access Utah Promise Scholarship, offered through the Utah System of Higher Education, and Pell Grant funding are used to cover the first two years of attendance. The For Utah Scholarship and Pell Grant money are applied to tuition and fees during the final two years of enrollment. To qualify, students must be Utah residents and first-time freshmen with a grade point average of at least 3.2 in high school, and they must annually complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and meet subsequent Pell Grant eligibility.

Utah also promotes an Access Utah Promise Scholarship, which covers the first two years of college for all eligible students. The program is similar to other states’ last dollar promise scholarships.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Utah can continue to analyze the outcomes data in regard to persistence to help drive decision-making and expand additional supports, such as supplemental funds for books and travel, that fall outside the funds provided for tuition. Utah can also consider a “last mile” scholarship for students who are within 25 percent of completing their degrees.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Florida – Last Mile College Completion Program
- Rhode Island – Rhode Island Promise
- Tennessee – Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect

RESOURCES
- For Utah Scholarship Program

POLICIES
- USBE R620. Access Utah Promise Scholarship
- UT Code § 53B-8-3-302. Access Utah Promise Scholarship
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
Performance funding has been a part of the funding for institutions in the Utah System of Higher Education since 2013. In the beginning, it was primarily funded on a one-time basis, making it a challenge for institutions to fund ongoing initiatives that drive improved performance. In 2017, ongoing funding was established. The Utah System of Higher Education Board adopted a revised outcomes-focused model based on legislation (SB 117) passed in the 2017 legislative session. The legislation established the Performance Funding Restricted Account. The account is funded from 14 percent of the estimated revenue growth from targeted jobs in FY 2019 and 20 percent in FY 2020 and thereafter. Based on policy, the Legislature may send those funds to institutions that have met the required performance metrics set by the Board of Regents. The metrics include metrics such as completion (and completion by underserved students), responsiveness to workforce needs and high market demand fields, institutional efficiency, and research.

In 2021, Utah enacted legislation outlining the development of a new outcomes-based funding model. The model will be based on access, timely completion and high-yield awards and increases the percent based on performance from 10% to 15%.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Utah can continue to streamline and strengthen the performance-based budgeting data being reported and help create additional incentives for institutions to make the necessary changes to increase their outcomes and alignment to workforce needs.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Missouri – Performance Funding
- Tennessee – Outcomes-Based Funding Formula
- Texas – State Technical College Funding Model

RESOURCES
- Performance Model Legislative Brief

POLICIES
- UT Code § 53B-8-3-702. Performance Funding
- SB 117. Higher Education Performance Funding
- SB 193. Higher Education Performance Funding Update
KEY POLICY

Stackable Degrees and Credentials

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
Utah codified its definition of stackable credentials at the postsecondary level, providing greater clarity for institutions and learners on the state’s prioritization of advanced learning and degree attainment. Utah defines stackable credentials as a “sequence of credentials that: (a) an individual can build upon to access an advanced job or higher wage; (b) is part of a career pathway system; (c) provides a pathway culminating in the equivalent of an associate’s or bachelor’s degree; (d) facilitates multiple exit and entry points; and (e) recognizes sub-goals or momentum points.”

The state’s definition is used to determine institutional qualifications for additional, targeted funding for strategic workforce incentives at the regional and state levels and is referenced in the registered apprenticeship legislation, noting that registered apprenticeships are part of stackable credentials.

The Utah System of Higher Education also qualifies its approach to stackable credentials through its roles and missions document. The document notes what types of credentials can be awarded by what institution and the vertical alignment with other institutions, allowing a student to stack their earned credentials.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Utah can continue to collect data on credential attainment and the stacking of credentials broken out by student demographics to analyze if additional supports or resources are necessary from an equity perspective.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Colorado – Stackable Credential Legislation
- Idaho – SkillStack
- Indiana – Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant

RESOURCES
- What is “Reverse Transfer” and a “Stackable Credential”?
- Stackable Credentials and Reverse Transfer Information Brief

POLICIES
- UT Code § 53B-26-1-102. Definition: Stackable Credentials
- UT System of Higher Education 53B-1-101.5. Institutional Roles and Missions
WORKFORCE READINESS

Ensure the skills, credentials and apprenticeships students pursue help to prepare a strong workforce within the state.

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WORK-BASED LEARNING

Establish a statewide K–12 and postsecondary work-based learning program that promotes learning through a series of progressive learner experiences both in the classroom and in a work setting. Provide guidance and support for how education and business and industry collaborate to achieve mutual priorities.

APPRENTICESHIPS

Establish clearly defined program guidance for state-promoted apprenticeships outlining prerequisites, requirements, funding, stakeholder incentives and participant outcomes.

INDUSTRY-VALUED CREDENTIALS

Ensure all industry credentials earned in K–12 or postsecondary are aligned with high-demand, high-skill, high-wage occupations and valued by state and regional employers.

SKILLS RETRAINING/ CREDENTIALING

Identify and promote non-degree programs and credentials that support new, transitioning and displaced learners in career change and advancement. Ensure that supports include funding supports for learners and incentives for participating employers who train or retrain them.
KEY POLICY

Work-Based Learning

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
State work-based learning and apprenticeship programs are defined and acknowledged both in state code and in agency policy. Chapter 12 of Title 63N addresses Professional and Technical Workforce Development Programs. Within the chapter, both work-based learning (WBL) and apprenticeship programs are defined, along with the oversight role of the Talent Ready Utah Center (part 5), which resides under the Governor’s Office of Economic Development. Additionally, Utah Administrative Code specifically addresses WBL. This code includes funding for local education agency-sponsored WBL programs.

The Utah State Board of Education has a very comprehensive WBL manual that includes sample forms and liability issues.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Utah can continue to analyze the data on WBL experiences and outcomes to provide appropriate supports to enhance equity in the offerings and experiences.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
• Delaware – Work-Based Learning Practicum
• Georgia – Work-Based Learning Framework
• Rhode Island – PrepareRI Work-Based Learning Navigator

RESOURCES
• WBL Manual

POLICIES
• UT Code § 63N-12-5. Talent Ready Utah Center
• UT Admin Code R277-915. Work-Based Learning Programs
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

As mentioned in “Work-Based Learning,” state apprenticeship programs are defined and acknowledged both in state code and in agency policy. In 2021, Utah amended its definitions to include "industry-driven, high-quality career pathways" to ensure alignment with employer demands. Chapter 12 of Title 63N addresses Professional and Technical Workforce Development Programs. Within the chapter, both work-based learning and apprenticeship programs are defined, along with the oversight role of the Talent Ready Utah Center (part 5), which resides under the Governor’s Office of Economic Development. The Utah Department of Workforce Services oversees the registered apprenticeship program for the state. In 2017, HB 280 created the position of commissioner of apprenticeship programs to be housed within the Department of Workforce Services. The state’s program follows the federal protocols. The apprenticeship posting board, which is overseen by the Department of Workforce Services, is an easy-to-use board for seekers.

Utah also promotes Talent Ready Apprenticeship Connection (TRAC) youth apprenticeships, which are geared toward secondary students in the Salt Lake City area.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Utah can continue assessing the success of TRAC and determine if expansion to more regions across the state would be beneficial, as promoted in Perkins V state plan. The state can also continue the expansion of its registered apprenticeship program by auditing fully the current partnerships and determining areas to enhance, strengthen and expand.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Iowa – Earn and Learn
- Kentucky – Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky and Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship
- New Jersey – Apprenticeship Network
- South Carolina – Apprenticeship Carolina

RESOURCES

- TRAC
- Apprenticeship Program
- Apprenticeship Report
- Apprenticeship Posting Board

POLICIES

- UT Code § 63N-12-5. Talent Ready Utah Center
- Utah HB 0391 - Apprenticeship Definitions
Utah promotes certifications at the secondary level deemed of value to industry. These are affiliated with their promoted CTE programs. The state also promotes a Skills Certificate Program that is intended to show/reflect skills competencies if a student should earn it. The Skills Certificate Program is intended to “provide statewide competency-based student assessments. Student skill attainment is measured by core standards and competencies needed to be successful in the workforce.” The state utilizes a skills test weight chart and skills exam scoring rubric to assist schools in determining levels of student competencies.

According to ExcelinEd’s research for Credentials Matter through a partnership with Burning Glass Technologies, 47 percent of the credentials earned by K–12 students and 67 percent of the credentials earned by postsecondary students were in demand for 2017–18 for occupations that pay at least $15 an hour. Utah was one of only four states that was able to provide postsecondary credential attainment information. The Utah State Board of Education can clarify the vetting process to identify industry-valued certifications and their placements within promoted CTE programs. As part of this, Utah can continue to align and develop clear definitions and criteria for credentials of value across K–12 and postsecondary systems with business and industry at the table.

**PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES**
- Indiana – [Promoted Industry Certifications](#)
- Kentucky – [Valid Industry Certifications](#)
- Louisiana – [Industry-Based Certification State Focus List](#)

**RESOURCES**
- [Skills Certificate Program](#)
- [CredentialsMatter.org](#)
- [List of Certifications](#)
- [Skills Test Weight Chart](#)

**POLICIES**
N/A
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
The Utah System of Higher Education qualifies which institutions provide retraining/reskilling programs through its roles and missions document. The Utah Department of Workforce Services promotes federal retraining programs that are available to companies and workers.

In 2021, Utah created the Adult Learners Grant Program to provide financial assistance to adult students who are at least 26; are financially needy; and are pursuing an online degree or certificate in a field with an industry need. The program is designed to increase the number of Utah adults who are able to obtain a college degree or certificate by lessening the financial burden that tuition and fees can create. The bill requires that grants are prioritized for students from rural areas, minority students, low-income students, and first-generation students. Additionally, the state will monitor program efficacy through an annual report that shares each of the following: number of grant recipients at each eligible institution; average amount of grant money provided per grant recipient; program outcomes; and recommendations for program modification, including recommended funding levels.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
As the state has noted in its legislation, given the newness of the Adult Learners Grant Program it will be important for Utah to collect and report on data examining the effectiveness of the program in terms of student outcomes, and adjust the program as needed.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Indiana – Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant
- Ohio – TechCred
- Washington – Worker Retraining Program

RESOURCES
- Adult Education Policy/Procedure Manual
- Utah Works Program

POLICIES
- UT System of Higher Education 53B-1-101.5, Institutional Roles and Missions
- UT HB 0328 – Adult Learners Grant Program
EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Incentivize workforce engagement in student pathways and reduce the barriers that keep employers from participating.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>K–12</th>
<th>SUB-ASSOCIATE</th>
<th>ASSOCIATE</th>
<th>BACHELOR’S OR HIGHER</th>
<th>WORKFORCE</th>
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<td>INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT INCENTIVES</td>
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<td>LEGAL BARRIERS</td>
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INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT INCENTIVES
Establish, sustain and promote a comprehensive set of industry and employer engagement incentives for supporting education to workforce pathways. Incentives may include grant funds, tax credits, or local and regional support services.

LEGAL BARRIERS
Remove or lessen legal barriers such as liability insurance, workers’ compensation and worksite age restrictions to provide more learners with work-based learning opportunities.
Industry Engagement Incentives

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

There is no formal statute or agency policy/initiative that can be located that addresses incentives for industry engagement in education (K–12 or postsecondary) beyond workforce-related initiatives, such as apprenticeships.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Utah can create policy incentives designed to increase employer engagement, particularly at the K–12 level. Utah can provide financial incentives or tax credits for employers that hire students participating in a formal work-based learning program or funding reimbursement for employers who train, hire and retain new or incumbent workers to fill in-demand positions within recognized job fields.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Georgia – Work-Based Learning Premium Credit
- Indiana – Next Level Jobs Employer Training Grant
- Iowa – Tax Credit

RESOURCES

N/A

POLICIES

N/A
KEY POLICY

Legal Barriers

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
The Governmental Immunity Act of Utah and the State Risk Fund Liability Policy provide protection and liability coverage to student interns for the covered institutions of higher education and public education while such students are engaged in internship activities.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
Utah can create a partnership with an external staffing agency or company to employ work-based learning students who are then placed at businesses. This will help to reduce many of the burdens such as workers’ compensation liability and other restrictions.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
• Kentucky – Apprenticeship Programs & Partnerships
• Rhode Island – Work Immersion Training Grant
• Texas – Insurance Coverage

RESOURCES
• State Risk Management Fund Liability Policy

POLICIES
• UT Code § 63A-4-204. Risk Management Fund
**DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING**

To ensure the strength of all the other policies, there must be cross-sector agreement on outcomes, strategies to get there and data to track progress.

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<td><strong>PROGRAM QUALITY MEASURES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish shared statewide definitions and measures for quality of and success in education to workforce pathways. Ensure these shared priorities extend across agencies and systems and inform decisions about program offerings, funding and outcomes.</td>
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| **STATE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM** | | | | |
| Ensure the state’s cross-agency data system collects and reports on data needed to evaluate education workforce programs against shared metrics for quality and success. Data should span agencies and education systems and into the workforce to inform decision-making and drive outcomes. |
DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

KEY POLICY

Program Quality Measures

STATE POLICY ANALYSIS

Utah was one of the first states nationally to establish a postsecondary education goal when Governor Gary Herbert, backed by his Governor’s Education Excellence Commission, launched the On PACE: 66% by 2020 initiative. The goal was further refined by the Utah State Board of Regents but later morphed into 66% by 2025.

Both the Utah State Board of Education and the Utah System of Higher Education promote program outcome indicators specific to their system. However, as with shared indicator definitions, there does not appear to be any formal statute or agency policy/initiatives that address cross-agency outcome metrics for a comprehensive education to workforce pathway approach.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Given the many strengths that Utah has pursued already around education attainment and workforce attainment, the state can formally engage state agencies to undertake and set a shared commitment to education to workforce pathways that requires shared program and policy definitions leading to a more intentional collective response and accountability from multiple state agencies.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

- Colorado – Talent Pipeline Report
- Indiana – Governor’s Workforce Cabinet
- Rhode Island – PrepareRI

RESOURCES

- Utah System of Higher Education Strategic System Metrics
- Every Student Succeeds Act Accountability
- Perkins V State Plan

POLICIES

N/A
STATE POLICY ANALYSIS
The Utah Data Research Center was created in 2017. The center integrates data from the Utah System of Higher Education, Utah State Board of Education, Utah Department of Health and Utah Department of Workforce Services. Additionally, the center is tasked with taking research requests. The center is housed in the Department of Workforce Services.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN
It is unclear how different state agencies utilize the data system to drive agency-specific or cross-agency policies and initiatives. Utah can examine how the data can be utilized to drive decision-making at the agency level.

PROMISING EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES
- Colorado – Talent Pipeline Report
- Florida – Talent Development Council
- Kentucky – KYStats

RESOURCES
- Utah Data Research Center

POLICIES
- UT Code § 35A-14. Longitudinal Data System
- SB 194. Utah Data Research Center