

President Elizabeth Cantwell and Dean Al Smith Visit Logan City School District to Observe the Power of Science of Reading Instruction

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Superintendent Frank Schofield of Logan City School District, President Elizabeth Cantwell, USU, Dean Al Smith, Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services and Principal Marisa Oviatt, Adams Elementary observe reading program at Adams Elementary School

Utah State University (USU) President Elizabeth Cantwell and Emma Eccles Jones Endowed Dean Al Smith, Emma Eccles College of Education and Human Services, visited Adams Elementary School in the Logan City School District (LCSD) on November 7. Superintendent Frank Schofield and Director of Elementary Schools for Logan City School District, Jed Grunig, greeted the visitors who observed a kindergarten class that has seen large increases in their students' reading scores. USU student teachers from the School of Teacher Education and Leadership were in the classroom leading reading activities alongside the kindergarten teacher and a reading specialist.

"I am really thrilled to see our student teachers working side-by-side with teachers in the classroom," said President Cantwell, "and really amazing things are evident in how students in the classroom are behaving around their learning. "

The purpose of the visit was to showcase the work that the Center for the School of the Future has done to support LCSD's early literacy instruction. The Adams Elementary

student body is 64% economically disadvantaged and 20% multi-lingual learners.

"The gains we have seen in our early literacy scores are truly remarkable. A 96% proficiency rate in kindergarten is not only life-changing for the students but will lead to improved outcomes at every grade level for years to come," said Grunig. "This results from a committed TEAM of teachers, coaches, experts from USU, and administrators. Without the dedication and efforts of our teachers and coaches, our students would not have experienced these life-changing literacy outcomes."



President Cantwell, Vice President Wagner, Dean Smith, Dr. Parker Fawson, Center for the School of the Future meet with administrators from the Logan City School District to discuss partnership with USU.

In 2022, Utah lawmakers set an ambitious statewide goal to have 70% of third grade students reading on grade level by July 2027. The law they passed (SB 127 Early Literacy Outcomes Improvement) included funding to train educators in the science of reading. Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) is a comprehensive professional learning program designed to provide elementary educators and administrators with deep knowledge to be literacy and language experts in the science of reading. LETRS teaches the skills needed to master the fundamentals of reading and writing instruction including phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and written language. After SB 127 was passed and elementary teachers were taking the LETRS training, the district was struggling with applying the principles in the classroom. Grunig reached out to Parker Fawson, executive director of the Center for the School of the Future to work with his teachers. The Center for the School of the Future (CSF), housed at USU, is designated by the Utah Legislature to facilitate K-12 University partnerships to drive educational innovations throughout the state. CSF staff members were invited to partner with LCSD leadership to translate science of reading research into classroom actionable practices to improve K-2 students' reading proficiency.

“When teachers use science of reading evidence-based teaching routines and practices, students learn to read proficiently,” commented Fawson. “This is exactly what happened recently in the Logan City School District. By end of year in 2022, 113 kindergarten students district wide weren’t reading on grade level compared to only 11 kindergarten students district wide who weren’t reading on grade level in 2023.”

In addition to receiving support for early literacy, Adams Elementary has partnered with CSF and the School of Teacher Education and Leadership to establish itself as a Teacher Academy School. In Teacher Academy Schools, pre-service teachers earn university credit with a Learn & Earn option that offers the possibility of a paid practicum as a member of an instructional team while students earn their degree (dependent on available funds).

The partnership with Adams Elementary provides an apprenticeship with increased hands-on experiences for students before they begin student teaching. Given the excellent reading instruction that occurs at Adams Elementary, students will be mentored in literacy instruction practices that are solidly grounded in the science of reading.