

Special Ed Times at JSD

March 2026 Newsletter



March Events

5: Post High
Transition Fair

6: Teacher
Professional Day - No
School

10: ACT Testing for
11th Grade
No School for 10th &
11th Grade

20: Middle School
Team Leader
Meeting

20: Vertical Day:
Middle/High School
SCSC

20: District SEB
PLC's

23: High School
Team Leader
Meeting

27: Last Day of
Quarter 3

Note from Mike Trimmell, Special Education Administrator

As spring begins to unfold, so do the incredible talents and strengths of our students. March is a time of blooming—not just in nature, but in our classrooms, hallways, and hearts. The growth we witness in our students is a direct reflection of your unwavering dedication, creativity, and compassion.

Special education teachers are the quiet architects of transformation. You nurture progress in ways that often go unseen by the world, but are deeply felt by every student you support. Whether it's a small step in communication, a breakthrough in behavior, or a newfound sense of confidence, your guidance helps students blossom in their own unique and beautiful ways.

You are patient gardeners of potential, planting seeds of possibility and tending to them with care. You celebrate every milestone, no matter how small, and you never stop believing in the power of growth. Your work is not just about teaching—it's about empowering, uplifting, and unlocking the brilliance within each child.

This month, as nature begins to bloom, take pride in the growth you've cultivated. Like spring flowers, each student blooms at their own pace—and your steady, loving support makes that journey possible. You are making a difference that lasts far beyond the classroom.

Thank you for being the light that helps our students grow. Your impact is immeasurable, and your heart is the reason so many young lives are flourishing.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

- DLM: Teachers who need to administer the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessment, Spring testing window opens March 09, 2026. Please reach out to Jen Birrell (Elementary) or Lucia Evans (Secondary) with questions.
- Special Education purchase orders/requisitions/reimbursement requests for the 2025-26 school year must be received by Friday, March 6, 2026 @ 5:00 p.m. All purchase orders/requisitions, should be routed through Amanda Hamblin in the Special Education Department.
- Staffing Update: Carson Smith Scholarships, Child Find & Private School Testing
Dr. Sheldon Russell, Ed. D., has announced his retirement effective at the end of the 2025–2026 school year. Please continue to contact him for any Child Find or Carson Smith Scholarship questions through the remainder of this year. Brenda Cruz will be transitioning into this role and will assume these responsibilities starting in the 2026–2027 school year.

ROTATING STATION

What Is Transition?

Transition is the process that helps students with disabilities move successfully from high school into adult life. Beginning at age 14, schools work with students and families to plan for the future by identifying goals, strengths, and needed support. Transition focuses on three main areas: education/training, employment, and independent living skills. Teachers play a key role in helping students explore career interests, build real-world skills, and connect with community resources. From classroom instruction to work experiences and self-advocacy practice, every part of transition is designed to prepare students for life after high school and support them in becoming as independent and successful as possible.

As we head into the end of the school year, please begin reviewing the students on your caseload to determine who will be graduating. For all seniors and students who are reaching the maximum age of eligibility, make sure to complete the Summary of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance. In addition, please complete the Change of Placement form for any student graduating with a high school diploma or reaching the maximum age of eligibility. Thank you for staying proactive and helping our students transition successfully!

Here are a few resources that may also be helpful:

Jordan School District Transition Fair – Thursday March 5th 2026 from 4pm to 7pm at JATC-South Campus 12723 South Park Ave. Riverton Utah 84065

[Jordan School District Website Post High Resources](#)

[Utah's Postsecondary Transition Website](#)

[Utah Parent Center](#)

If you have any questions please contact - ashley.calhoun@jordandistrict.org

Teachers Toolbox

RULEBOOK REMINDERS

IEP GOALS

Writing effective Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals involves measurable, student-centered, and realistic targets that address specific academic or functional needs identified in the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP).

This [Tip Sheet](#) Covers everything you need to know to stay compliant.

TEACHING TIDBITS

Teacher Tool - Find the Problem

Sometimes it's not the math problems that fail students, it's the reading that does. Too many times, kids rush to the numbers. They skip the story, and they miss the point. So, let's flip the process. This tool teaches students to slow down and think like a reader first. They don't start with the math; they start with meaning. First, read the last sentence. Know what you are solving before you solve it. Next, think about what I actually have to figure out? Then read the whole story with no pencil, no numbers. Just understanding. Students picture the situation. They visualize what's happening. Only then do they reread with a pencil, but still no numbers. They focus on the words -- the little math words -- the ones that change and depict everything. Then they are solving the problem with numbers. This is perfect for daily problem-solving routines. When the student understands the story, their math finally makes sense.

[Anchor Chart](#)

[Student Handout](#)

Behavior Bytes

1% Better
BEHAVIOR BYTE

Two-Minute Relationship Builders

Take a couple of
minutes each day to
ask a student about
their weekend, hobby,
or interest. Over a
week, those small
moments add up to
stronger rapport.



- JBAT -

1% changes for 100% results

ALL-STARS SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Sheldon Russell
Self-Contained Teacher
West Jordan High School

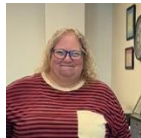


Sheldon has been the rock for his students at West Jordan High. He is the kind of teacher who expects the best from his kids because he truly believes in them and what they are capable of accomplishing. You can see his passion for teaching in everything he does. He's always the first to listen to a new idea if it means his students might benefit. At first glance he looks tough, since he loves weight lifting, but anyone who knows him knows he's actually one of the kindest, most caring people you'll ever meet. We're all going to miss him at Jordan School District, but we're so happy for him as he heads into retirement. Thanks for everything, Sheldon!

Cari Forman
Physical Therapist
Early Intervention

Cari is the kind of early intervention physical therapist whose work feels less like a job and more like a calling. She serves infants and toddlers with a wide range of developmental delays and disorders, and her heart particularly shines in her work with medically complex babies and NICU graduates. She has been a gift to our program for over a decade, daily stepping into some of the most tender moments in a family's life. In spaces where fear and hope sit side by side, she brings not only deep clinical expertise but a steady, reassuring presence that helps families breathe a little easier. She honors each child and family with genuine respect, meeting challenges with creativity and thoughtful, individualized care. Cari is deeply community-

Kristen Norris
Teacher Specialist
Speech-Language Pathologist
District Wide



Kristin is the Teacher Specialist for SLPs and Audiology at Jordan School District, and we are so lucky to have her. She is incredibly knowledgeable and supportive, not just of her SLPs, but of every teacher she works with. Kristin wears many hats, yet she always makes time to listen and help, sharing the wisdom she's gained throughout her career. Even with her busy role at JSD, Kristin goes above and beyond by staying heavily involved in statewide initiatives that impact the profession for everyone. Her dedication was recently honored at the Utah Speech-Language-Hearing Association (USHA) conference, where she received the Outstanding Clinical Supervisor Award. Kristin truly cares about her field and students. We are so grateful for everything she does for our district.

Cassen Williams
Speech-Language Pathologist
Silver Crest Elementary



Cassen is one of the hardest working SLPs. She truly cares about the kids she works with and is always thinking about what more she can do to help them grow. She puts so much time and effort into planning and supporting her students, and it shows in the progress they make. Cassen is a positive and kind person who shows up with a smile, and always finds something encouraging to say.

This year, she was named School Clinician of the Year by the Utah Speech-Language-Hearing Association (USHA), and if you know Cassen, that recognition is very well deserved.

Thank you, Cassen, for everything you do for your students and your team.

Karen Moore
Vice Principal
Joel P Jensen



Karen sets high expectations for both students and staff, and leads in a way that helps everyone rise to those expectations. She has a special ability to connect with students who may be struggling the most and helps them see their potential. Because of those relationships, students feel supported and are able to find success.

Karen takes compliance seriously and works hard to make sure everything is done the right way, while also supporting her staff through the process. Jordan School District is lucky to have her. Thank you for all that you do Karen.

Amy Dimick
Resource Teacher
Foothills Elementary



Amy Dimick is a dedicated teacher who has transitioned from a secondary general education background to embracing the role of an elementary resource teacher. Amy consistently goes above and beyond to meet the diverse needs of her students. Her sense of humor and positive attitude create a joyful learning environment, while her hard work and love for her students are apparent in everything she does.

