



UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

David L. Crandall, Chair David L. Thomas, First Vice Chair
Jennifer A. Johnson, Second Vice Chair

Dixie L. Allen Brittney Cummins C. Mark Openshaw
Laura Belnap Linda B. Hansen Spencer F. Stokes
Leslie B. Castle Mark Huntsman Terryl Warner
Barbara W. Corry Jefferson Moss Joel Wright

Brad C. Smith, Chief Executive Officer
Lorraine Austin, Board Secretary

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Utah State Board of Education

FROM: Brad C. Smith
Chief Executive Officer

DATE: April 9-10, 2014

ACTION: R277-410 *Accreditation of Schools* (Amendment and Continuation)

Background:

Recent changes in accreditation procedures are not currently reflected in Board rule. In addition to the amendments to R277-410, the rule is continued consistent with Board policy for continuation of rules and the Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act.

Key Points:

R277-410 continues to be necessary because it provides accreditation procedures and responsibilities for public schools.

Anticipated Action:

It is proposed that the Law and Licensing Committee consider approving R277-410 for continuation and amendment on first reading, and if approved by the Committee, the Board consider approving R277-410 for continuation and amendment on second reading.

Contact: Sydnee Dickson, 801-538-7515

1 **R277. Education, Administration.**

2 **R277-410. Accreditation of Schools.**

3 **R277-410-[2]1. Authority and Purpose.**

4 A. This rule is authorized under Utah Constitution
5 Article X, Section 3 which vests general control and
6 supervision of public education in the Board, by Section 53A-
7 1-402(1)(c)(i) which directs the Board to adopt rules for
8 school accreditation, and Section 53A-1-401(3) which allows
9 the Board to adopt rules in accordance with its
10 responsibilities.

11 B. The purpose of this rule is to specify accreditation
12 procedures and responsibility for public schools for which
13 accreditation is required or sought voluntarily and for
14 nonpublic schools which voluntarily request AdvancED Northwest
15 accreditation.

16 **R277-410-[1]2. Definitions.**

17 A. "Accreditation" means the formal process for internal
18 and external review and approval under the Standards for the
19 Northwest Accreditation Commission, a division of Advance
20 Education Inc., (AdvancED).

21 B. "AdvancED" means the provider of accreditation
22 services based on standards, student performance and
23 stakeholder involvement and is a nonprofit resource offering
24 school improvement and accreditation services to education
25 providers.

26 C. "Board" means the Utah State Board of Education.

27 D. "Elementary school" for the purpose of this rule
28 means grades no higher than grade 6.

29 E. "Junior high school" for purposes of this rule means
30 grades 7 through 9.

31 F. "Middle school" for the purpose of this rule means
32 grades no lower than grade 5 and no higher than grade 8 in any
33 combination.

34 G. "Northwest" means the Northwest Accreditation
35 Commission, the regional accrediting association of which Utah
36 is a member. Northwest is an accreditation division of

37 AdvancED.

38 H. "Secondary school" for the purpose of this rule means
39 a school that includes grades 9-12 that offers credits toward
40 high school graduation or diplomas or both in whatever kind of
41 school the grade levels exist.

42 I. "State Council" means the State Accreditation Council,
43 which is composed of 15- 20 public school administrators,
44 school district personnel, private and special purpose school
45 representatives, and USOE personnel. The members are selected
46 to provide statewide representation and volunteer their time
47 and service.

48 J. "USOE" means the Utah State Office of Education.

49 **R277-410-3. Accreditation of Public Schools.**

50 A. The USOE has responsibility to facilitate
51 accreditation by the Board for Utah public schools. The Board
52 is not responsible for the accreditation of nonpublic schools,
53 including private, parochial, or other independent schools.

54 B. Utah public secondary schools, as defined in
55 R277-410-1H and consistent with R277-481-3A(2), shall be
56 members of AdvancED Northwest and be accredited by AdvancED
57 Northwest.

58 C. Utah public elementary and middle schools that desire
59 accreditation shall be members of AdvancED Northwest and meet
60 the requirements of R277-410-5 and R277-410-6. AdvancED
61 Northwest accreditation is optional for Utah elementary and
62 middle schools.

63 D. All AdvancED Northwest accredited schools shall
64 complete and file reports in accordance with AdvancED
65 Northwest protocols.

66 E. If a school includes grade levels for which
67 accreditation is both mandatory and optional, the school shall
68 be accredited in its entirety.

69 **R277-410-4. Accreditation Status; Reports.**

70 A. The Board accepts the AdvancED Northwest Standards
71 for Quality Schools as the basis for its accreditation

72 standards for school accreditation.

73 B. The Board requires Utah public schools seeking
74 accreditation to satisfy additional specific Utah assurances
75 in addition to required AdvancED Northwest standards.

76 C. A school shall complete reports as required by
77 AdvancED Northwest and submit the report to the appropriate
78 recipients.

79 D. A school shall have a complete school evaluation and
80 site visit at least once every five years to maintain its
81 accreditation.

82 E. The USOE may require on-site visits as often as
83 necessary when it receives notice of accreditation problems,
84 as determined by the USOE, AdvancED Northwest, or its State
85 Council.

86 F. The school's accreditation status is recommended by
87 the State Council following a review of the report of the
88 school's External Review. Final approval of the status is
89 determined by the AdvancED Commission and approved by the
90 Board.

91 **R277-410-5. Accreditation Procedures.**

92 A. The evaluation of secondary schools for the purpose
93 of accreditation is a cooperative activity in which the
94 school, the school district, the USOE, and AdvancED Northwest
95 share responsibilities. A school's internal review,
96 development, and implementation of a school improvement plan
97 are crucial steps toward accreditation.

98 B. A school seeking AdvancED Northwest accreditation for
99 the first time shall submit a membership application to
100 AdvancED. The accepted application shall be forwarded to the
101 AdvancED [~~State~~]Managing Office Director.

102 (1) If a school's application for membership is accepted
103 by AdvancED, ~~the school is granted provisional accreditation~~
104 ~~status for two years and shall have an accreditation visit in~~
105 ~~year three of the school's operation]~~an on-site Readiness
106 Review shall be scheduled through the Utah AdvancED Managing
107 Office. Upon successful completion of the Readiness Review,

108 the school shall become a candidate for accreditation.
109 Candidate schools are not accredited until such status is
110 officially granted.

111 (2) A school may remain in candidacy for no more than two
112 years prior to hosting an External Review Team accreditation
113 visit. The External Review Team shall be staffed with [~~A~~
114 school may request an accreditation visit prior to year three
115 if the school has sufficient student and financial data.

116 ~~—(2) Following a visit by]~~ at least two qualified
117 educators verifying a school's compliance with accreditation
118 standards. Following [and] approval by both the Utah AdvancED
119 Council and the AdvancED Commission, the school shall[~~then~~
120 receive accreditation. A school may request an External
121 Review accreditation visit prior to year two if the school has
122 sufficient student and financial data.

123 C. AdvancED Northwest accredited schools shall be subject
124 to:

125 (1) compliance with AdvancED Northwest membership
126 requirements;

127 (2) satisfactory review by the AdvancED State Council,
128 AdvancED Northwest Commission and Board approval;

129 (3) a site visit at least every five years by an external
130 review team to review the internal review materials, visit
131 classes, and talk with staff and students as follows:

132 (a) The external review team shall present its finding
133 in the form of a written report in a timely manner. The
134 report shall be provided to the school, school district
135 superintendent or local charter board chair, and other
136 appropriate parties.

137 (b) AdvancED staff shall review the external review team
138 report, and consult with the Utah AdvancED[~~State~~] Council. [
139 ~~and t]~~The AdvancED Commission shall grant accreditation status
140 if appropriate.

141 D. Following review and acceptance, accreditation
142 external review team reports are public information and are
143 available upon request.

144 **R277-410-6. Elementary School Accreditation.**

145 A. Elementary schools desiring accreditation shall be
146 members of AdvancED Northwest and meet the standards required
147 for such accreditation as outlined in this rule.

148 B. The accreditation of Utah elementary schools is
149 optional; interested elementary schools may apply to AdvancED
150 Northwest for accreditation.

151 C. Accreditation shall take place under the direction of
152 AdvancED Northwest.

153 **R277-410-7. Junior High and Middle School Accreditation.**

154 A. Junior high and middle schools desiring accreditation
155 shall be members of AdvancED Northwest and meet the standards
156 required for such accreditation as outlined in this rule.

157 B. The accreditation of Utah middle schools is optional;
158 interested middle schools may apply to AdvancED Northwest for
159 accreditation.

160 C. Public junior high and middle schools that include
161 grade 9 shall be members of AdvancED Northwest and be visited
162 and assigned status by Advanc[ed]ED Northwest.

163 D. The AdvancED Northwest accreditation standards
164 provided in this rule are applicable to junior high and middle
165 schools in their entirety if the schools include grade 9
166 consistent with R277-410-6C.

167 **R277-410-8. Board Accreditation Standards.**

168 A. Board accreditation standards include AdvancED
169 Standards for Quality Schools and Utah-specific requirements.
170 Each standard requires the school to respond to a series of
171 indicator statements and provide evidence of compliance as
172 directed.

173 ~~[B. AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools.~~

174 ~~— (1) Purpose and Direction~~

175 ~~— (2) Governance and Leadership~~

176 ~~— (3) Teaching and Assessing for Learning~~

177 ~~— (4) Resources and Support Systems~~

178 ~~— (5) Using Results for Continuous Improvement]~~

179 [e]B. Utah-specific assurances include essential
180 information sought from schools to demonstrate alignment with
181 Utah law and Board rules. Utah-specific assurances are
182 available from the USOE Teaching and Learning Section.

183 **R277-410-9. Transfer or Acceptance of Credit.**

184 A. Utah public schools shall accept transfer credits
185 from accredited secondary schools consistent with R277-705-3.

186 B. Utah public schools may accept transfer credits from
187 other credit sources consistent with R277-705-3.

188 **KEY: accreditation, public schools, nonpublic schools**

189 **Date of Enactment or Last Substantive Amendment: [~~June 9,~~**
190 **~~2014]~~2015**

191 **Notice of Continuation: [~~August 1, 2012]~~2015**

192 **Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: Art X Sec 3;**
193 **53A-1-402(1)(c); 53A-1-401(3)**