

# A Spirit of Unity

Celebrating Forty Years of the Brigham Young University-Public School Partnership



BYU-PUBLIC SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP





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*“One day, near the end of his life, Mark Twain was asked how he felt. ‘Not bad,’ he said, ‘considering the alternative.’ The alternative to the notion of school-university partnership is much the same. We know what happens when schools and universities do not work together. When separate, neither has the motive nor the means to renew itself in areas where both should work together. We reaffirm the soundness of the fundamental notion of symbiotic partnerships between schools and universities.”*

—John Goodlad, January 1992

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# Message from the Governing Board

## ***Celebrating Four Decades of Successful University-Public School Partnering***

Every university-public school partnership is unique, just like any relationship between two individuals. To know what has contributed to the vitality and longevity of the BYU-Public School Partnership (BYU-PSP) we must know something about each of the partner institutions, the basis for their relationship, their expectations of each other, the possibilities and grounds for sustained collaboration, and the purposes and goals they are working toward. To celebrate our 40 years of successful partnering, this publication addresses these very needs.

In 2024, we not only celebrate 40 years as a university-school partnership, but also introduce a new guiding document, one that serves to vitalize our collaborative work after four decades. We invite you to deepen your understanding and commitment to the work of improving every classroom in our schools and the educator preparation programs offered at the university and through professional development. The work both challenges us and renews us, and it is deepened and made more meaningful and effective when every partner is fully engaged in this worthwhile endeavor.



Kendra Hall-Kenyon  
Dean, David O. McKay  
School of Education, BYU



Paul Sweat  
Superintendent, Wasatch County School District  
Chair, BYU-PSP Governing Board



# A Guiding Document

For partnerships to thrive over time and through difficulties and change, members must share core values and purposes and recognize the importance of organizational agreements that provide both guidance and inspiration.

When the Brigham Young University-Public School Partnership was formally created in April of 1984, a charter document was established identifying its mission to “improve teaching and learning by merging theory and practice in a spirit of collaboration and trust.” From its beginnings, and continuing throughout its 40 years of existence, the BYU-PSP has been consistent in its foundational principles, ideas, and values. Occasional changes or modifications to this charter document have been made over the years to strengthen the shared vision and mission of the Partnership. In the spirit of renewal and improvement, a refreshed guiding document for the Partnership was collaboratively crafted in our 40th anniversary year. This publication shares that guiding document, which identifies the vision, mission, beliefs, and commitments of the Partnership.

One clear indicator that our Partnership beliefs and commitments are not only vision, but practice, is when its members choose to regulate their actions and efforts consistent with its shared purposes, benefitting both partners who participate and students who are the primary focus of our work. The rewards of our collaborative efforts manifest in improvements in the preparation of educators, the conduct of our schools, the level of satisfaction of educators in the profession, and, most importantly, in the learning and well-being of students.





# The Brigham Young University-Public School Partnership

## Guiding Beliefs & Commitments

Since 1984, the BYU-Public School Partnership has worked to advance student learning and wellbeing through the simultaneous renewal of educators, teacher education, and schooling. Comprised of five public school districts, the David O. McKay School of Education, and BYU colleges of arts and sciences that have teacher preparation programs, the Partnership finds purposeful renewal in our shared beliefs, which guide educators to engage in change and continuous improvement.

### BELIEFS

- Teaching is an inherently moral endeavor because it involves human relationships and judgments that impact others. Educators act morally when they decide and act to create conditions that promote thriving for students.
- Education plays a vital role in preparing young people for the rights and responsibilities of self-governance. Public schools are not the only institution responsible for preparing our youth for citizenship, but they are an important and necessary one.
- Public schools teach and nurture students in the manners and habits of a democratic way of life. Such habits must be taught, modeled, practiced, and acted upon to ensure the continued health of our society.
- Public education plays a fundamental role in providing access to education for all.
- Good schools require well-prepared teachers, and good teacher education programs require access to good schools.

Members of the BYU-Public School Partnership honor these beliefs and act on them in shared stewardship. To this end, we make the following commitments.

### COMMITMENTS

***Civic Preparation and Engagement:*** The Partnership develops educators who model and teach the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for civic virtue and engagement in our society.

***Equitable Access to Knowledge:*** The Partnership develops educators who are committed to and actively provide equitable access for all students to the fullest possible range and richness of the educational experience.

***Engaged Learning Through Nurturing Pedagogy:*** The Partnership develops educators who are competent and caring and who promote engaged learning through appropriate instructional strategies, high expectations, and positive classroom environments and relationships.

***Stewardship:*** The Partnership assists educators in their role as stewards who oversee, protect, and care for the wellbeing of students, schools, and communities.

***Simultaneous Renewal:*** The Partnership cultivates in educators a commitment to continuous improvement through inquiry, reflection, and action, both within one's professional practice and collaboratively within the Partnership.



# A Partnership Frame of Mind

*The Partnership is a community: of learners,  
for learners,  
and by learners.*

As a community of learners, we focus on the development and growth **of** every member and maintain a high degree of sensitivity for the well-being of each individual. We are **for** each other as we participate in one another's development and learning, and we are able to accomplish this best **by** everyone participating and contributing. In the Partnership, everyone is a learner; everyone is a teacher.



Bullough & Rosenberg (2018) remind us that partnership calls us “to connection, cooperation, and caring for one another, even as uncertainty and self-interest tug us to return to our tribes—familiar, homogenous, comfortable (but ever so limited)”. Partnerships form community, and for the BYU-PSP, that includes five public school districts and all the colleges on the BYU campus that have educator preparation programs.

Central to our Partnership is the relationship that connects the partners. The BYU-PSP embraces the vital purposes of teaching and learning and shares a common moral vision among its partners. Supportive relationships based on trust and respect greatly enhance the interaction and collaboration of the partners. The Partnership remains healthy when its members are engaged and unified around its purposes. Indeed, it renews itself as its partners create and improve something that matters for themselves, for others, and for the schools and communities in our nation.







# Partnership Beliefs

***Essential to the BYU-PSP are the following beliefs:***

- ***Teaching as a Moral Endeavor***
- ***Preparing Youth for Civic Responsibilities and Engagement***
- ***Education for Everyone***
- ***Striving for Excellence through Simultaneous Renewal***

## ***Teaching as a Moral Endeavor***

Teaching and learning indispensably rely on human relationships, and these connections are fundamentally moral in character and consequence. We recognize that teaching can have both good and bad consequences and that action taken on the part of an educator can produce meaningful consequences and carry implications for learners. Educational philosopher Gary Fenstermacher expressed it this way:



What makes teaching a moral endeavor is that it is, quite centrally, human action undertaken in regard to other human beings. Thus, matters of what is fair, right, just, and virtuous are always present. Whenever a teacher asks a student to share something with another student, decides between combatants in a schoolyard dispute, sets procedures for who will go first, second, third, and so on, or discusses the welfare of a student with another teacher, moral considerations are present. The teacher's conduct, at all times and in all ways, is a moral matter. For that reason alone, teaching is a profoundly moral activity.



Teaching is both inherently and unavoidably a moral endeavor. Daily, teachers confront complex decisions that rely on many different kinds of knowledge and judgment and that can involve high-stakes outcomes for students' futures. Educators in the Partnership aspire to keep what is best for the child at the center of their decision making.

Understanding that teaching is a moral endeavor matters because it 1) recognizes the fundamental purposes of teaching, 2) connects to the primary reasons teachers choose a career in education, and 3) provides access to the moral rewards of teaching (Osguthorpe, 2023).



Richard Osguthorpe suggests that the moral rewards of teaching are acquired through the exercise of virtue on the part of the educator and that these internal goods are the outcomes of efforts made to achieve excellence. Some of the moral rewards teachers can experience include:

- increased self-efficacy and fulfillment.
- enhancement of common cause.
- sense of noble purpose.
- genuine satisfaction with practice.
- authentic learner participation.
- meaningful connection with learners.

Timothy McMannon summarized the importance of teaching as a moral endeavor when writing, “Educators—be they school faculty, teacher educators, or arts and science professors—have chosen to embrace a morally based narrative for education and schooling. They see schools as places where democracy is learned and practiced, where schooling is far more than job training, where education is a seamless process of self-improvement. Each part of the mission is based on and permeated by moral dimensions.”







# Partnership Beliefs

## *Preparing Youth for Civic Responsibilities and Engagement*

An effectively working democratic government requires the involvement, or engagement, of its citizens. A shared understanding of our nation's purposes, ideals, and ideas captured in its founding documents provides a basis for continuous collaboration in working to "form a more perfect union." But democracy is more than a form of government; it is a shared way of life. John Dewey defined democracy as "a form of associated living." Society remains potentially fragile as it endures the stresses, tensions, and differences that arise when protecting the liberties and rights of all citizens.

Because prepared and active citizens are essential in a democratic form of government, all must be educated for the discharge of their responsibilities. People are not born with the skills and knowledge necessary to sustain a democratic way of life; they acquire these skills through education. Public schools are essential in developing and educating youth for democratic citizenry. Benjamin Barber emphasized that "Public schools are schools of publicness: institutions where we learn what it means to be a public and start down the road toward common national and civic identity. They are forges of our citizenship and the bedrock of our democracy." John Goodlad added, "Not only do schools have an essential role to play in the development, health, and well-being of our nation's young, but they are also the only institutions we have for rigorously promoting and sustaining our social and political democracy."

### REFERENCES

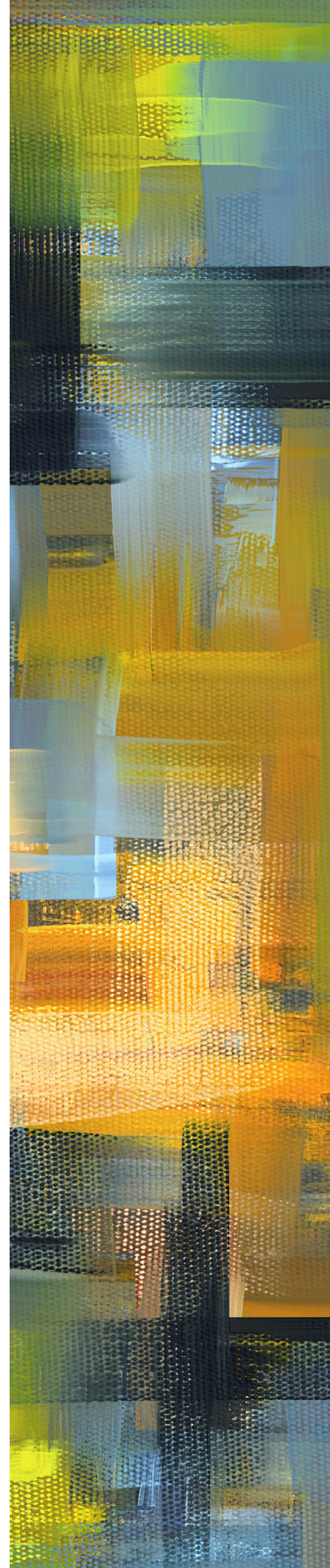
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# Partnership Beliefs

## *Education for Everyone*

The Partnership is committed to the belief that the well-being of our democratic society requires education for all, regardless of individual characteristics, conditions, or status. John Goodlad observed, “Without a solid educational foundation, the democratic state becomes as aimless and vulnerable as a rudderless ship in a storm-tossed sea.” This recalls to our memory the advice given by Thomas Jefferson in 1820, “I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.” We acknowledge the historical and present forms of inequality and injustice in ours and all societies, which create barriers for individuals to exercise full participation. The Partnership is committed to providing the best educational opportunities and experiences possible for all those who attend our public schools. Our future will be increasingly determined by our capacity and our will to educate all students well.







# Partnership Beliefs

## *Striving for Excellence through Simultaneous Renewal*

A core belief of the BYU-PSP is that excellent schools require well-prepared teachers and that excellent educator preparation programs require access to the best schools exhibiting the very best practices. For both the schools and the university to become and remain exemplary, the partnering institutions must work together.

Over time, partners need to be able to change, grow, and develop together. One of the compelling rationales for partnerships between universities that prepare educators and the public schools where educators work with students is that both include organizations and settings that need concurring renewal—both improve, and both benefit from the other's improvements. The Partnership is committed to getting better at what it does.

Renewal goes to the heart and soul of the Partnership. It is a process of continuous reflection defining the timeless character of the organization and those components that need or ought to change. Renewal involves everyone. It connects individual purposes and commitments with the larger partnership in ways that enable members to combine their energy and talents for a common purpose and find satisfaction in so doing. Passion and conviction are enlarged. Learning and continuous improvement are pathways to renewal. Through the Partnership approach, everyone learns, and everyone supports learning for others.



# Partnership Commitments

The guiding document of the Partnership begins with a set of belief statements. To be part of the Partnership involves embracing these beliefs and operationalizing them through the activities and initiatives that constitute our work. Five specific commitments unify and focus our combined efforts in preparing and educating the young. These commitments enable every member of the Partnership to develop strength and confidence regarding their own personal responsibilities and the overall purposes of the Partnership. The commitments are so named because they identify how members of the partner organizations act.







***Partnership Commitment:***

# Civic Preparation & Engagement

**The Partnership develops educators who model and teach the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for civic virtue and engagement in our society.**

***What This Means for Us***

Members of the Partnership recognize and embrace the responsibility of preparing youth for participation in American democratic society.

***Why This Commitment is Needed***

Children and youth must be guided in their development of character, competence, and skills necessary for the demands and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic nation. No one is born with these traits; such capacities are acquired through education and experience. Public schools are where young people learn what it means to be a member of the public and begin to form a common national and civic identity. We look to public education to provide for the young experiences living democratically, where the habits and manners of democracy take root and begin to grow.

***Partnership In Action***

Educators in the Partnership accomplish this responsibility through explicit teaching, by being personal examples of caring professionals, by creating and conducting schools and classrooms in ways that exemplify democratic practices and values, and by practicing democratic manners and behaviors in their personal conduct and as represented in the quality of relationships within the school community.

## ***Partnership Commitment:***

# Equitable Access to Knowledge

**The Partnership develops educators who are committed to and actively provide equitable access for all students to the fullest possible range and richness of the educational experience.**

## ***What This Means for Us***

The central challenge for today's public schools is no longer simply providing access to opportunities for schooling, it is providing access to high levels of learning and the wellbeing of all.

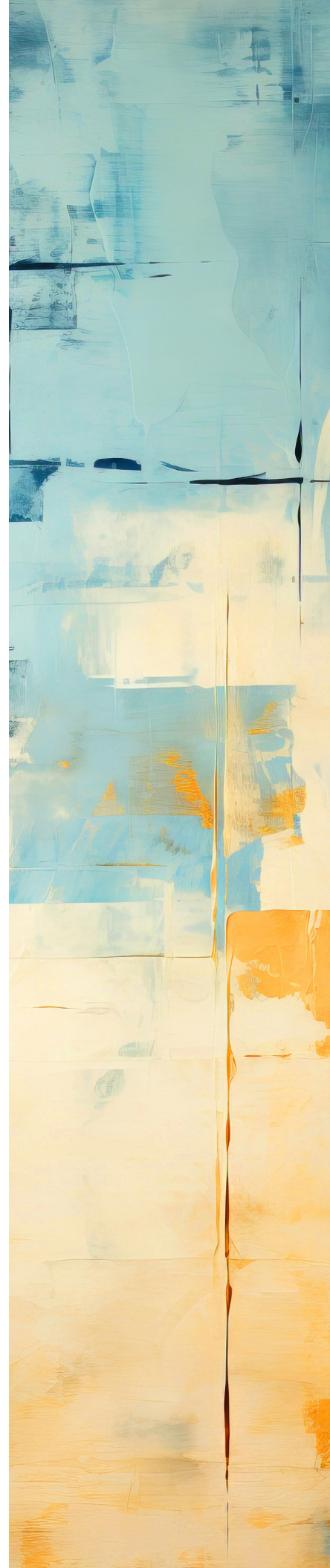
## ***Why This Commitment is Needed***

Democracies must be committed to developing schools that serve well all of their children and their societies. Some children have less reasonable opportunity to acquire the knowledge and abilities that will help them achieve in school and thrive in and contribute to society. Access to educational resources has been and continues to be uneven in our communities and nation. We see the road to educational equity as providing full access to rigorous curriculum with high levels of support informed by the diverse needs of students.

## ***Partnership in Action***

Resources the Partnership can help provide for all students include:

- a. well prepared and well supported teachers.
- b. high quality curriculum.
- c. most appropriate instruction for each child.
- d. understanding and acting upon the strengths of each student
- e. sufficient financial and material resources.
- f. schools organized for learning.
- g. ongoing professional development for educators.
- h. standards, technology, and assessments that support educational goals.





## ***Partnership Commitment:***

# Engaged Learning through Nurturing Pedagogy

The Partnership develops educators who are competent and caring and who promote engaged learning through appropriate instructional strategies, high expectations, and positive classroom environments and relationships.

## ***What This Means for Us***

Educators within the Partnership are committed to engaging in pedagogical practices that forge a caring and effective connection between those who teach and those who learn. Nurturing pedagogy emphasizes the nature and quality of relationships that obtain between students and professional educators.



## ***Why This Commitment is Needed***

The creation of nurturing settings in schools and the development of nurturing relationships support student learning and achievement. Engaged learning results in students having a deep understanding of content and the ability to use that understanding fluently.

## ***Partnership in Action***

Caring is a moral obligation for those who take on the responsibility of teaching the young. A central part of being a professional educator is a commitment to help all students flourish.

## **Partnership Commitment:**

# Stewardship

**The Partnership assists educators in their role as stewards who oversee, protect, and care for the wellbeing of students, schools, and communities.**

### ***What This Means for Us***

To exercise responsible stewardship is to see oneself as part of the larger Partnership with its chosen mission, purposes, and values. All educators in the Partnership see themselves, regardless of assigned roles, as educational leaders and as keepers and nurturers of core values and action.

### ***Why This Commitment is Needed***

With a sense of stewardship, partners obligate themselves individually and collectively to the welfare of the larger organization. An effective school-university partnership depends on all members feeling responsible for the interests and wellbeing of the whole.

### ***Partnership in Action***

Individually and collectively, we must all be dedicated to promoting student growth and to seeking continuous improvement in our personal assignments and stewardship. The BYU-PSP operates on the belief that partners working together and feeling responsible and accountable to each other can achieve more together than they can accomplish separately.





## *Partnership Commitment:*

# Simultaneous Renewal

**The Partnership cultivates in educators a commitment to continuous improvement through inquiry, reflection, and action, both within one's professional practice and collaboratively within the Partnership.**



### ***What This Means for Us***

The improvement of anything requires renewal. Things left uncared for tend to deteriorate. Educational renewal is the exercise of patient, ongoing care and, while monitoring the effectiveness of that care, making adjustments where necessary or desirable.

### ***Why This Commitment is Needed***

The central purpose of our Partnership is that of learning and renewing. Educational renewal requires the continuous examination of Partnership purposes, roles, and responsibilities to avoid stagnation in the conduct of our public schools and educator preparation programs.

### ***Partnership in Action***

The work of renewal is educative. It involves partners in critical inquiry about foundational ideas so that their commitment to those ideals is informed, articulate, and enduring. Renewal is about the need to make caring, compassion, freedom, dignity, and responsibility central to the mission of schooling.

# Collaborative Structures



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*A major source of the Partnership's vitality springs from the ongoing, dedicated collaboration of university and K-12 educators working to improve teacher education and schooling. Key decision-makers regularly meet within established collaborative structures.*

**Governing Board** – District superintendents, the dean of the McKay School of Education, and the Partnership executive director foster and sustain the involvement of the partner organizations and provide direction and resources that advance the purposes of the Partnership.

**Center for the Improvement of Teacher Education and Schooling (CITES)** – A team of administrators, faculty, and staff housed in BYU's McKay School of Education assists the Partnership by facilitating its initiatives, programs, and committees. CITES has responsibility for examining and promoting the mission, purpose, and values of the Partnership.

**University Council of Teacher Education (UCOTE)** – BYU's associate academic vice president of undergraduate studies, dean of the McKay School of Education, associate deans of arts and sciences colleges with educator preparation programs, and the directors of the Educator Preparation Program and CITES coordinate to ensure greater alignment and coherence in BYU's educator preparation programs.

**Professional Development Coordinating Council (PDCC)** – District curriculum directors, and representatives from the McKay School of Education, BYU colleges of arts and sciences, and CITES collaborate on projects to improve teaching and learning, including teacher endorsement programs, conferences and workshops, and expanding capacity of educators to lead professional learning communities.

*Professional Advisory Councils (PACs) plan and coordinate activities and professional development in their respective areas of stewardship.*

**Early Childhood and Elementary Education Professional Advisory Council (EEPAC)** – District elementary education directors/principal supervisors, mentor teachers, facilitators, clinical faculty associates, university liaisons to the school districts, and representatives from BYU's Education Advisement Center and CITES.

**Secondary Education Professional Advisory Council (SEPAC)** – District secondary education directors/principal supervisors, BYU teacher preparation faculty, and representatives from BYU's Education Advisement Center and CITES.

**Special Education Professional Advisory Council (SPEDPAC)** – District special education directors, faculty members from the department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education, and representatives from BYU's Education Advisement Center and CITES.



# Partnership Governing Board



**Rick Nielsen**, Superintendent, Nebo School District; **John Patten**, Executive Director, BYU-Public School Partnership; **Kendra Hall-Kenyon**, Dean, McKay School of Education, BYU; **Anthony Godfrey**, Superintendent, Jordan School District; **Paul Sweat**, Superintendent, Wasatch County School District and Chair, BYU-Public School Partnership Governing Board; **Shane Farnsworth**, Superintendent, Alpine School District; **Wendy Dau**, Superintendent, Provo City School District

## Center for the Improvement of Teacher Education and Schooling



**John Patten**  
Director



**Alena Allred**  
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**Cally Flox**  
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Arts Education



**Barry Graff**  
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**James Huston**  
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Arts Education



**Erika Richards**  
Research Staff



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Irene Rice Pereira (1902-1971), *The Spirit of Unity*, no date, acrylic on canvas, 32 1/8 x 42 inches.  
Brigham Young University Museum of Art, gift of Richard L. and Marian N. Warner, 1973.

*With such variety of color, textures, and shapes, what can this abstract painting teach us about unity, and how might it characterize the BYU-Public School Partnership?*

*Individual elements in the painting contribute unique qualities to the overall effect, just as each person in the Partnership offers individual strengths, skills, and perspectives. While abstract art relies on the interplay of various elements to create a cohesive whole, the Partnership thrives on the interdependence of individuals working together towards common goals. Each person's contribution is essential for the success of the overall endeavor.*



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