

# Utah connects public health data with school enrollment and attendance



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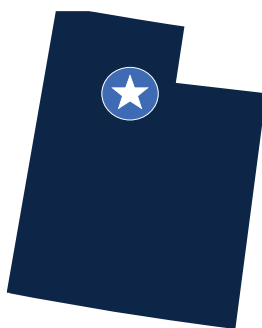
CATEGORY: **Laboratory Data Exchange**

Salt Lake County Health Department used the integration of public health data and school enrollment/attendance information to track COVID-19 in schools, to keep students healthy, and to maintain in-person learning.

## The “What”

**Enrollment:** The Utah State Board of Education sends the state health department a file containing attendance records for schools within the state. This includes the name and date of birth of the student, school(s) attended, and the date range for their attendance at that school. This data is manually uploaded into a database about once a week, which starts an automated process that links the information to COVID-19 cases and stores it in the exposure section of EpiTrax, the surveillance system for Utah public health.

This allows public health to track how many cases of COVID-19 are in each school. This was important at the peak of COVID-19 when school infection rates triggered interventions such as mass testing and temporary online learning.



**Attendance:** All Utah local health departments have real-time access to public school attendance records. In Fall 2021, Salt Lake County Health Department received an electronic laboratory report (ELR) result saying that a high school student was positive for COVID-19. Health department staff cross-referenced the high school attendance records and saw the student was marked present in the morning. They alerted the school nurse and principal, who pulled the student out of class and put him in an isolation room. Health department and school staff notified the parents, who eventually agreed to keep their child at home for the recommended isolation period.

## The “So What”

Cross-referencing the enrollment and attendance data likely avoided an outbreak of COVID-19 in that high school. This helped keep students, staff and teachers healthy and allowed students to continue learning in a safe environment.

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