



UTAH DANCE EDUCATION ORG.

## SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL DANCE PROGRAMS Considerations for Administrators

The Utah Dance Education Organization (UDEO) is a non-profit state organization dedicated to the art form of dance as an essential educational component of life-long learning. It is a state affiliate of the National Dance Education Organization and supported by a board of professionals in the field of dance education. One of the primary goals of UDEO is to build and support public school dance programs aimed at supporting the development of the whole person in and through dance.

UDEO board members and members of UDEO have come together to create this resource for school administration looking to support and grow educational dance programs in their school.

### INDICATORS OF A STRONG DANCE PROGRAM

- Provides a form of healthy personal expression
- Connects cognitive, physical, social, and emotional domains in authentic ways
- Develops collaborative and interpersonal skills, along with civic engagement
- Celebrates diversity of learning styles, culture, gender, ability, level, and student interests
- Fosters inclusive school climates with cross-disciplinary work
- Centered around the Utah Core Standards in Dance: create, perform, respond, connect
- Directed by a certified/licensed and visionary dance educator
- Cultivates creativity, individual voice, and innovation
- Includes and supports healthy views of all students regardless of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, abilities, and background
- Connects students to rich dance learning opportunities
- Prepares students for post-graduation opportunities
- Collaborates with the school and community to create and produce meaningful projects.

# EDUCATIONAL DANCE EMPHASIZES

**PROCESS** not product

**ADJUDICATION** not competition

**RATING** not ranking

**SHARING** not winning

**CREATIVITY** not conventions

**FEEDBACK** not trophies

**DIVERGENT POSSIBILITIES** not singular solutions

**QUALITATIVE MERIT** not quantitative tallies







## OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT RECOGNITION IN DANCE

- Outstanding Student Choreography Award at the Utah High School Dance Festival (UHSDF)
- Superior Ratings from adjudication at UHSDF
- Outstanding Student Award presented at UHSDF
- Inductee of National Honor Society of Dance Arts
- Deseret News Dance Sterling Scholar Program
- Shakespeare Festival Competition
- Community Involvement & Art for Social Change
- National Reflections Contest



### DOES A TROPHY MATTER?

A trophy can be impressive, but an uncontextualized memento does not signify authentic learning processes. Student growth, depth of thought, flow, and self-actualization are not easily identified in competitive programs that delineate winners and losers. Students should be recognized for their work, but trophies are not the only way.

Educational dance values festivals and adjudication over competitions and point systems. Adjudication involves professional dance artists observing dance works with the purpose of providing descriptive feedback. Students receive insights about salient moments, artistic impact, and aesthetic aspects of their work. They are encouraged to implement the feedback in their future creative endeavors; and to continue honing their craft as dancers, artists, choreographers, and problem-solvers. Thus, adjudication becomes a significant component in the learning cycle, not an endpoint punctuated with a trophy.

# SUPPORTING DANCE EDUCATORS

## Connecting with Professional Organizations and Associations

The educator assigned to direct a dance program is the number one factor in determining the impact and success of that program. Teachers who feel connected, inspired, and supported are best prepared to meet the demands of a job in public education and serve the individual needs of their students (Darling-Hammond).

**The Utah Dance Education Organization (UDEO)** can help you:

- provide professional development for dance educators,
- inspire teacher renewal,
- facilitate networking opportunities,
- and increase opportunities for student enrichment.

The following is a list of UDEO services and other opportunities offered by professional organizations to support teachers of dance in public schools.



### UDEO Fall Conference for Educators

The UDEO Fall conference provides dance educators an opportunity to learn, share, and gain new ideas for the studio, stage, and classroom. Dance educators are able to hone their pedagogical and artistic skills while learning from educators and artists that are moving the field of dance education forward. The UDEO Lifetime Achievement Award and the UDEO Educator of the Year are awarded at this event. Dance educators are recognized for their achievements and for the impact they have had on their students and schools that they have served.

**Nominate a dance educator  
at your school or district  
for recognition at [udeo.org](http://udeo.org).**



### UDEO Webinars

UDEO sponsors webinars on various topics every few months that encourage, support, and inspire dance educators in a flexible and convenient way. Past webinars and the schedule for future events can be found on [udeo.org](http://udeo.org).





## **National Dance Education Organization Conference (NDEO)**

Held annually in the fall, a typical NDEO National Conference includes three full days of over 200 workshops, master classes, panel and paper presentations, social events and performances. A full day of pre-conference intensives precedes the official start of conference. [www.ndeo.org](http://www.ndeo.org)

## **Ririe-Woodbury Teacher Workshop**

Held each summer at the Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center in Salt Lake City, the Ririe-Woodbury's Teacher Workshop is designed for teachers who are working in the university, professional, and/or secondary school settings. Shared experiences in technique, improvisation, choreography, and body conditioning provide participants the opportunity for artistic growth and rejuvenation. The participants address the Utah Fine Arts Core Curriculum requirements, trends in the field and issues of dance training and dance making in order to increase and elevate the skills and practices of teaching in the field. [www.ririewoodbury.com](http://www.ririewoodbury.com)

## **Repertory Dance Theatre Professional Development Workshops In-Service Workshops**

Repertory Dance Theatre offer teachers a better understanding of the Core Dance Standards, build their confidence level and help them acquire new skills to be successful in teaching the Dance Core in their classroom. Through mentoring, RDT helps teachers understand that dance is essential in the life of a healthy, productive society and that experiences in creative dance develop complex thinking skills, effective communication and collaboration. Teachers will explore lesson plans, study guides, create movement together and be inspired to include movement in their teaching styles. [www.rdt.org](http://www.rdt.org).



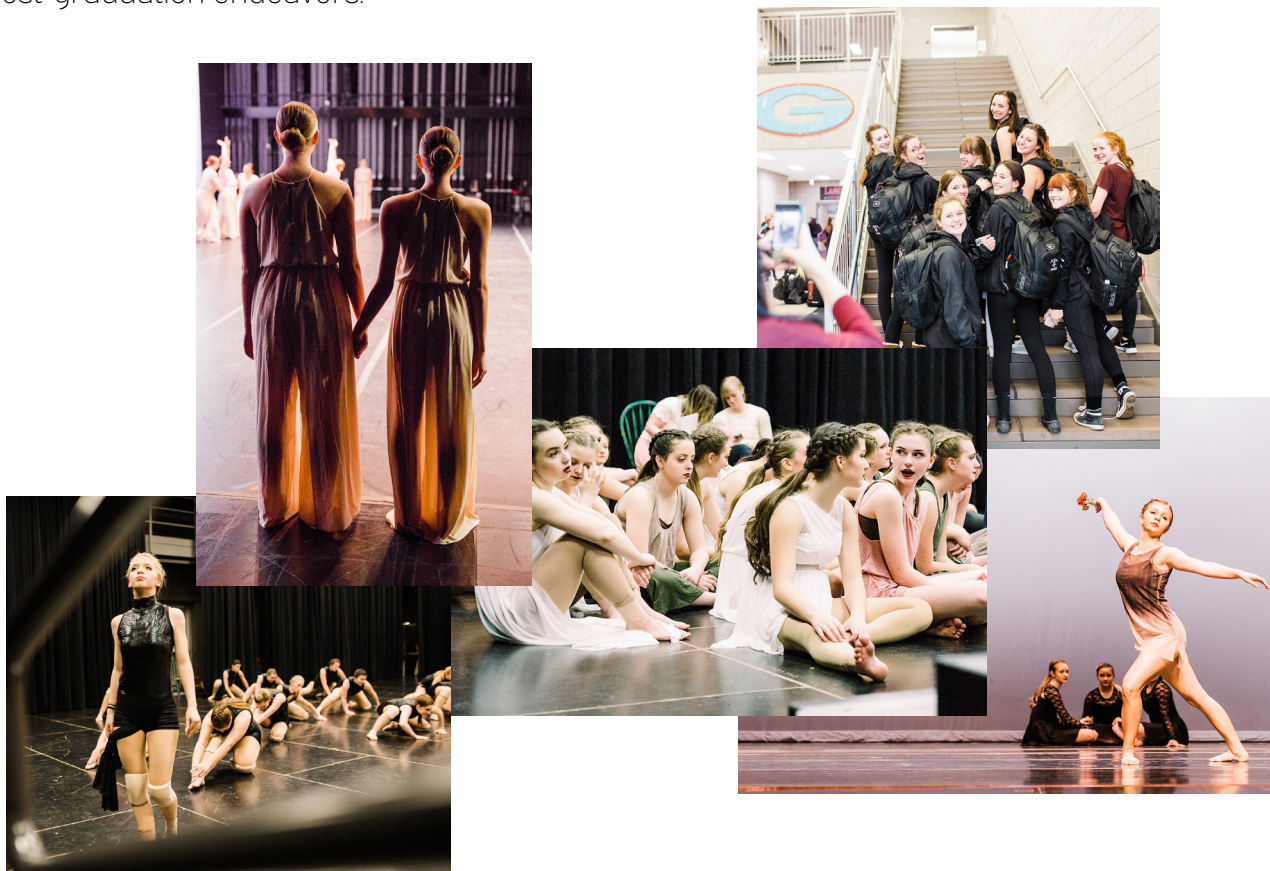
REPERTORY  
DANCE  
THEATRE



# SUPPORTING DANCE STUDENTS

## Connecting with Professional Organizations and Associations

Professional organizations and associations provide opportunities for student enrichment that often a single dance educator or dance program could not provide on their own such as festivals, adjudications, auditions, etc. Professional organizations can enrich dance education experiences that prepare students for post-graduation endeavors.



### Utah High School Dance Festival

The Utah High School Dance Festival boasts attendance of approximately 800 students annually. Supported by the Utah School Board of Education, the festival offers a multitude of opportunities for high school students including:

- auditions for scholarships from university and professional dance programs;
- adjudications and feedback sessions with dance professionals from universities and professional dance companies from throughout the state;
- introduction to recruiters from colleges and universities in Utah and surrounding states;
- classes with a wide range of professionals from various genres and cultural dance forms;
- recognition of members of the National Honor Society for Dance Arts.
- performing in the gala performance; and
- awards for student choreography and performance excellence.



## National Honor Society of Dance Arts

UDEO as a state affiliate of the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), proudly supports the National Honor Society for Dance Arts (NHSDA) for middle and high school age students in K-12 schools. Inducted students are encouraged to include their membership in scholarship packets and/or resumes for college or dance employment. All students inducted receive:

- a certificate of membership in the NHSDA,
- an NHSDA honor cord and gold pin for graduation ceremonies,
- invitations to participate in resume building and college preparation events, and
- mailings generated by the state chapters.

## Free Professional Performances

Local professional dance companies offer students free tickets to their student matinees that are abbreviated versions of their full-length evening performances performed during the school day. All you need to do is provide the transportation to the performance space. Check local university dance departments for opportunities to view college level performances.

Ballet West – [education@balletwest.org](mailto:education@balletwest.org)  
 Ririe-Woodbury – [education@ririewoodbury.com](mailto:education@ririewoodbury.com)  
 Repertory Dance Theatre – [lynne@rdtutah.org](mailto:lynne@rdtutah.org),  
 Children's Dance Theatre – [tannerdance@utah.edu](mailto:tannerdance@utah.edu)

## University Days of Dance

Many university dance programs will host high school students on campus for a full day of workshops, campus tours, and audition experience. Brigham Young University, the University of Utah, and Utah Valley University each provide their own day of dance, as may others. Check your local universities dance program websites for more information.



## Choreographic Residencies

Professional dance companies in Utah (such as Repertory Dance Theatre, Ririe-Woodbury, Wasatch Contemporary Dance Company, SALT, and others) send their dancers to choreograph for junior high and high school dance companies. This experience provides students with the opportunity to work closely with professional dancers and choreographers. Contact local dance companies in your area for more information on providing a professional guest artist for your students.

## Other opportunities:

- Summer Dance Workshops,
- Sterling Scholar, and
- Reflections Contests.



# HIRING A QUALITY DANCE EDUCATOR

## Tips and Recommendations for Administrators

Recruiting and hiring highly qualified educators is a challenging endeavor. Dance education experts from all over the state have compiled the following tips and recommendations for interviewing, screening, and hiring teacher candidates for your school. We hope you find this document useful and effective.

### Fun Fact!

Did you know Utah is one of the leading states for licensure with a dance education focus? Because of Utah's large-scale commitment to the arts, we have an extensive pool of dance educators certified to teach in public schools.

### Tip #1: Recruit from the best pool

Data shows that 'knowing someone' really does make a difference with hiring. Don't let the word-of-mouth process limit your hiring pool. Connecting with organizations like UDEO, university programs, and professional companies can make a big difference. Here's a list of helpful contacts to get you started:

- UDEO President & Executive Director, [udeo.org](http://udeo.org)
- BYU Dance Education Coordinator, [dance.byu.edu](http://dance.byu.edu)
- BYU ARTS Partnership Director, [education.byu.edu/arts/](http://education.byu.edu/arts/)
- UVU Dance Education Coordinator, [uvu.edu/dance/](http://uvu.edu/dance/)
- Weber State Dance Education Coordinator, [weber.edu/performingarts/dance.html](http://weber.edu/performingarts/dance.html)
- Southern Utah University Dance Education Coordinator, [www.suu.edu/pva/ta/](http://www.suu.edu/pva/ta/)



## Tip #2: Consider license, degrees, certifications, and accreditation

1. Does the candidate have a dance education teaching license/certification?
2. Evaluate your candidate's degree and program accreditation. Colleges and universities may sponsor dance experiences, but not an accredited educational dance program. Verify experience in a variety of courses taken in theory, technique, history, kinesiology, and pedagogy.

### Hint

Even many years of dance training does not necessarily prepare a dancer to teach..

A dance education teaching license indicates training in pedagogy, technique, creative process, dance science, social and historical context, and meaning making.



## Tip #3: Investigate pedagogical approaches, and dispositions

1. Does the candidate express pedagogical viewpoints, approaches, and dispositions that support:
  - Creative development and personal expression?
  - Scientifically-based dance training?
  - Inclusivity of all abilities, genres, cultures, etc.?
  - Developmentally appropriate content that considers the whole child, and supports physical, cognitive, emotional, and social well-being?
  - The school goals, educational philosophy, and community standards?
2. Does the candidate indicate a commitment to renewal and professional growth?
3. What is the candidates philosophy on competition vs. adjudication??

## Tip #4: Observe candidates teach

Observing candidates teach in an authentic setting will best demonstrate student-centered approaches, content/core curriculum commitment, and teacher presence.

You may also want to request to view a sample of the candidate's choreography.

## HINTS

Extreme stretching and high-impact movements can cause life-long injuries for the joints and other body functions.

When talking about students, if the candidate only uses "girls" to describe students, it may indicate that s/he may not be ready to support boys in a dance class.

Sexualized movement choices, revealing costumes, and explicit music could be indicators that a candidate is unprepared to address developmental stages for children and adolescents.

Listen to the language used by the candidate. Experienced dance educators speak professionally, anatomically, and age-appropriately when referring to different parts of the body.

For example they may use terms such as "ischial tuberosity", "gluteal muscles", "pockets" or "seat".



## Tip #5: Ask the right questions

- What is your favorite core arts standard to teach and why? Could you give an example of an activity that would teach this core standard?
- Explain a typical lesson plan for you. What could a student expect to do and learn in your class?
- Describe your choreographic process. How does it compare to your teaching process?
- Choose one of the following statements that resonates with you and explain why:
  - Dance is entertainment
  - Dance is art
  - Dance is exercise
  - Dance is culture
  - Dance is for everyone
  - Dance is education
- How do you anticipate adapting to the multicultural needs in your classroom? What does a culturally responsive dance classroom look like?
- How will you connect students to higher education and career opportunities in dance?
- Literacy is a big school goal. How will you support reading and writing in your dance classroom?
- If the candidate teaches a class ask: What reflections do you have about the class you taught? What do you feel was successful? What would you modify for the future?
- What is/are one or two of your favorite dance genres to teach and why? Every dance genre has value, but these follow-up questions may reveal candidate dispositions, depth of knowledge, and/or priorities



A strong dance lesson plan encompasses the core art standards of **CREATE, PERFORM, RESPOND, CONNECT**, as well as essentials such as warm-up and cool-down.

### Modern

How would you respond to a student if s/he said, "Modern dance is weird?"

### Contemporary

Many students only associate contemporary dance with what they see on TV's *You Think You Can Dance*. How will you help broaden their perspectives?

### Ballet

Some students might claim that ballet is old-school. How would you help them get excited about this genre?

### Hip-Hop

How will you deepen students' learning in hip-hop considering sensationalized conceptions, cultural appropriation, and crude music and video associations?

### Ballroom

Competitions are a critical part of the ballroom, how do you cultivate healthy attitudes and self-esteem in a highly competitive genre?

# SUPPORTING DANCE PROGRAMS

## How Administrators Can Foster a Program That Thrives

### Provide support for the dance educator

- Support new and veteran dance educators with funds for professional development to renew the exhausted or inspire the eager.
- Pay for subs or find creative solutions to free up time for professional development. For example, theatre and dance educators could rotate on a schedule of combining classes to allow one educator to attend professional development.
- Allow time for dance educators to network through UDEO or district-wide, region, or state PLC's. Often a Fine Arts or Physical Education PLC at the school does not provide in depth content support for a singleton dance teacher.
- Provide opportunities for dance educators to be mentored and receive individual instructional coaching as needed.
- Get involved! Attend dance concerts, activities, and events.



**wjhsdancecompany on Instagram.** A message from one of our favorite administrators: "So glad to be a fan of #wjhsdanceco. These beautiful ladies are talented beyond belief. They make hard work look easy and represent #wjhs so well! I'm blessed to know them and to work with their amazing coach Natalie Nielsen." Thanks for all you do Donna Hunter! Your support means the world!

### Utilize social capital

- Network with other administrators, ask about their dance programs, get new ideas by understanding what is working for them.
- Manage your connections in your community to provide opportunities for students to participate civically and or to raise funds to support learning. Talk to businesses and families in your area who support dance, want to promote community values, or are interested in partnering with the arts to raise awareness of school and community issues.

### Create a safe, aesthetic dance space

- Do what you can, when you can, but make safety and aesthetics a priority.
- A hard wood sprung floor is the optimal flooring for a dance space as it minimizes impact on joints for the safety of dancers.
- A studio with mirrors—and curtains to cover the mirrors—is ideal. Mirrors develop a sense of awareness and allow dancers to self-correct and be precise in their movement, while covering mirrors helps students find inner connectivity and reduces inhibitions.



### Market the dance program

- Share the achievements of the dance students and programs through school newsletters, banners, posters, and marquees.
- Inform the community of the impact dance and the arts have on your students and school.



- A dance studio needs sufficient wall space for white boards, bulletins, student storage, and supplies. A dance program needs sufficient storage for costumes, props, mats, etc.
- Be creative! Consider alternative spaces such as a stage, cafeteria, or media center for dance class or request a double-wide trailer if remodeling is not an option.

### **Balance class sizes**

- In the development of safe technical skills and artful performance skills students need frequent one-on-one mentoring and enough space to safely explore broad ranges of movement. A crowded class can threaten a student's safety and their access to the feedback they need for success and safety.
- With that said, a social dance class may host more student's due to the formation-based organization of the movement being performed.

The following are recommendations for class size based on subject being taught:

- Dance I, Dance II, & Dance III courses between 20-25 students, but 30 students may be possible depending upon the specific instructor and dimensions of the space.
- Social Dance courses between 40-46 students
- Dance Company, 12-40 students depending on the vision and purpose of the program



### **Exhibit student learning through concerts**

- A dance concert will require various costumes, music accompaniment, lighting cues and technical production elements. The art form of dance considers production elements, such as costume and lighting design, to be an integral part of the artistry displayed on stage.
- Work with your dance educator, theatre educator, or stage support to rent, borrow, or purchase the needed equipment and supplies to support an artistic dance production.

### **Balance the Budget**

- Build the budget with fundraisers, community donations, grants, and partnerships.
- Work with the dance teacher, parents, and other administrators to stretch the budget. Sometimes, the priciest costumes could be forfeited for a great workshop, or a new sound system.
- Be aware of grants offered through community organizations in your area or the Utah Division of Arts and Museums, and work with your dance director to seek more funding when needed.

### **Invite Leadership**

- Dance educators have pedagogical strategies and collaborative skills that make them valuable team members. Invite them to participate in school leadership, to mentor other teachers, and give input on how they believe dance, and the arts, can better support the school's goals, mission, and vision, along with the individual learning needs of different students.

