

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s):

I am writing to tell you about an exciting project we are just beginning in our Utah Studies class.

As you might know, in our school we are increasingly using the teaching method of **Project Based Learning**, or PBL, to help students learn better. A project motivates students to gain knowledge, and they remember it longer. Projects give students the chance to apply the skills they learn in school to personally relevant and real-world situations. Your child also learns skills in PBL such as how to think critically, solve problems, work in teams, and make presentations. These skills will help students succeed in the future, both in school and in today's work world.

Our project is called **"Utah Valley: Hometown Hero"** and it will last about 3 weeks, finishing before the last week of school. Students will learn about many of the Utah Studies Standards the state expects them to cover in this class, such as: 2.1,2 – *Lasting Effects of Mormon / non-Mormon Migration to Utah*; 2.3 – *Patterns in settlement / urbanization of Utah*; 2.8 – *Student's own connection to Utah / complex history*; 3.3 *Utah's economic development*; 4.2 *Roles of Government*; 4.3 *Economic ties in Utah w/ others*; 4.4 *Evidence of past/present cultural groups*; 4.5 *Management of Natural Resources*; 5.1 *Recent Important Events*; 5.2 *Current Utah Issues + Solutions*; 5.4 *Recent Growth Trends*. Whew!

The project's Driving Question, which focuses our work, is **"How can we, as tour guides, show off & describe unique sites & things about our community (past, present, & future) to visitors?"** Students will be involved in **researching** on the **Internet**, **interviewing** community members, preparing an **oral presentation**, and creating a **group tour project** of their **local community** in a format of their choice, etc. Your child will **work in a team**, guided by me. We will be working with the **Utah Office of Tourism**, and local experts as well. We will be going outside the classroom to do **field work** in the local community, **meet** with **locals** who know the area, etc.

At the end of the project students will make **presentations** to the **public**. This presentation will take place during the last weeks of school on **Thursday, December 20th** from **6:00-7:00 pm**. We hope you will be able to attend! The students themselves are **required to be there*** to present their project to the public; they should plan on being there for at least 45 minutes. There **will** be prizes & treats, so make sure to come and support them!

Students will be assessed **individually** on their content knowledge, their collaboration skills, and their presentation skills. I have attached the rubrics (on my website) that we will use to guide the creation of our community tour and assess students' work. You may find these helpful in understanding what we are asking students to do, and supporting your child during the project. As parents or guardians, you can discuss the project at home, encouraging your child to think hard and ask questions about the topic. You can also support the project by helping in the classroom, taking students on field work, providing expertise and resources, etc.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the project!

Sincerely,

Mr. Joseph Wright

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**Note: if you have extenuating circumstances as to why they absolutely cannot attend the event, please contact me beforehand to explain why and we can come up with an alternative assignment.*