



Mountainland Region Youth Advisory Council: Utah State Capitol Visit

February 2026

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On February 10, 2025, members of the Mountainland Region Youth Advisory Council (MYAC) met at 7:45 a.m. for a civic engagement visit to the Utah State Capitol. Students in attendance included Lily B and Abby H from Freedom Prep, John S from Pleasant Grove, Logan W from Cedar Valley, and Gavin W from Springville.

Capitol Tour and Legislative Sessions

The council began the morning with a guided tour of the Capitol led by Steve Anderson, associate Vice President of University Relations and VP of Administration/Strategic Relationships for Utah Valley University. During the tour, members learned about the rich history of the Capitol building, including stories of early state leadership and the significance of the building's architecture and design. One particularly memorable story was about the first woman to serve in the Utah State Senate, who won her seat after running against her own husband — a powerful example of perseverance and progress in Utah's political history.



Youth council members had the opportunity to observe both a House legislative session and a Senate legislative session. This firsthand experience allowed students to see the legislative process in action and better understand how bills are presented, debated, and voted on. Students discussed current policy issues being addressed in Utah, including conversations surrounding limiting or eliminating cell phone use in schools.



Meeting with Senator Tony Abbott and Representative Val Peterson

Following the legislative sessions the youth council met with Senator Abbott and Representative Val Peterson, who spoke with students about how bills are made, the process bills go through, and state budgeting processes. Members learned how funding decisions are made, how priorities are established, and how legislators balance competing needs across the state. This discussion provided valuable insight into the financial responsibilities that accompany public service.

Thank you to Senator Abbott and Representative Peterson for their time and sharing with our youth council about the fascinating work happening up on Capitol Hill and for our great state of Utah!

Reflection and Career Aspirations

Throughout the visit, many MYAC council members expressed strong interest in pursuing careers in government, public policy, or civic leadership. Seeing the legislative process up close helped students envision themselves in future leadership roles and deepened their understanding of public service.

After concluding the Capitol visit, the youth council participated in a business lunch meeting to debrief the days events. During this time, members reflected on what they had learned, discussed their impressions of the legislative process, and shared how the experience influenced their perspectives on civic engagement.

The February meeting provided council members with meaningful exposure to state government and reinforced the importance of youth involvement in public policy and leadership.

Looking Ahead

The council is now preparing for the upcoming K-16 Counselor Conference on March 10th, where MYAC youth will serve as panelists. During this event, council members will share insights about the student experience, career readiness, and the importance of strong partnerships between students and school counselors. This panel provides an opportunity for youth voice to directly inform and strengthen educational practices across the region.

As the school year progresses, MYAC will also celebrate the graduation of several senior council members. With their graduation, new leadership opportunities will open for students across the Mountainland region. MYAC looks forward to welcoming new members who are passionate about leadership, civic engagement, and improving educational and career pathways for their peers.



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