

American Indian and Alaska Native Education Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Christine F. Watkins

Senate Sponsor: Ronald M. Winterton

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill addresses education planning and American Indian and Alaska Native students.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- modifies definitions;
- expands authorized expenditures under a grant program that provides grants targeted to the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students;
- addresses the adoption of the American Indian and Alaska Native education state plan;
- requires rulemaking and reporting; and
- makes technical and conforming amendments.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

53F-5-601, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2019, Chapters 186, 246

53F-5-602, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2020, Chapter 269

53F-5-604, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2020, Chapter 269

ENACTS:

53F-5-605, Utah Code Annotated 1953

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section 53F-5-601 is amended to read:

28 **53F-5-601 . Definitions.**

29 As used in this part:

- 30 (1) "American Indian and [~~Alaskan~~] Alaska Native concentrated school" means a school
31 where at least 29% of the school's students are American Indian or [~~Alaskan~~] Alaska
32 Native.
- 33 (2) "Native American Legislative Liaison Committee" means the committee created in
34 Section 36-22-1.
- 35 (3) "State plan" means the American Indian and Alaska Native education state plan adopted
36 under [~~Laws of Utah 2015, Chapter 53, Section 7~~] Section 53F-5-605.
- 37 (4) "Teacher" means an individual employed by a school district or charter school who is
38 required to hold an educator license issued by the state board and who has an assignment
39 to teach in a classroom.

40 Section 2. Section **53F-5-602** is amended to read:41 **53F-5-602 . Program created.**

- 42 (1)(a) In addition to the state plan[~~adopted under Laws of Utah 2015, Chapter 53,~~
43 ~~Section 7~~], beginning with fiscal year 2020-2021, there is created a program
44 administered by the state board to provide grants targeted to address the needs of
45 American Indian and [~~Alaskan~~] Alaska Native students.
- 46 (b) The program shall consist of a grant program to school districts and charter schools
47 to be used to fund materials, books, supplies, local and national conferences,
48 stipends, recruitment, retention, and professional development of teachers who teach
49 in American Indian and [~~Alaskan~~] Alaska Native concentrated schools.
- 50 (c) In determining grant recipients for at least two-thirds of the money appropriated to
51 the program, the state board shall give priority to American Indian and [~~Alaskan~~]
52 Alaska Native concentrated schools located in a county of the fourth, fifth, or sixth
53 class with significant populations of American Indians and [~~Alaskan~~] Alaska Natives.
- 54 (2) Up to 3% of the money appropriated to the grant program under this part may be used
55 by the state board for costs in implementing the program.

56 Section 3. Section **53F-5-604** is amended to read:57 **53F-5-604 . Liaison -- Reporting -- Meeting.**

- 58 (1) Subject to budget constraints, the superintendent of public instruction appointed under
59 Section 53E-3-301 shall appoint an individual as the American Indian-~~Alaskan~~] Alaska
60 Native Public Education Liaison.
- 61 (2) The liaison shall:

- 62 (a) work under the direction of the superintendent in the development [~~and~~
 63 ~~implementation~~]of the state plan and the implementation of the state plan through
 64 local plans created and implemented by LEAs, except that the local plans shall reflect
 65 the vision and mission provided in Section 53E-2-301; and
- 66 (b) annually report to the Native American Legislative Liaison Committee [~~created~~
 67 ~~under Section 36-22-1~~]regarding:
- 68 (i) what entities receive a grant under this part;
- 69 (ii) the effectiveness of the expenditures of grant money; [~~and~~]
- 70 (iii) implementation of the state plan; and
- 71 [~~(iii)~~] (iv) recommendations, if any, for additional legislative action.

- 72 (3) The Native American Legislative Liaison Committee shall annually schedule at least
 73 one meeting at which education is discussed with selected stakeholders.

74 Section 4. Section **53F-5-605** is enacted to read:

75 **53F-5-605 . American Indian and Alaska Native education state plan.**

- 76 (1) By no later than January 1, 2027, the state board shall adopt, by rule made in
 77 accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, an
 78 American Indian and Alaska Native education state plan to address the educational gap
 79 of the American Indian and Alaska Native students in the state.
- 80 (2) The state plan shall:
- 81 (a) identify the most critical academic needs of Utah's American Indian and Alaska
 82 Native students;
- 83 (b) recommend a course of action to meet the identified needs;
- 84 (c) be based on, and include, a summary of the best available evidence and most recent
 85 data;
- 86 (d) focus on specific actions;
- 87 (e) identify programs and resources that exist as of January 1, 2026, including the grant
 88 program created under this part;
- 89 (f) prioritize more efficient and better use of the programs and resources described in
 90 Subsection (2)(e) to meet the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students;
- 91 (g) include ongoing reporting to the Native American Legislative Liaison Committee;
- 92 (h) include a plan to hire, retain, and promote highly qualified teachers as quickly as
 93 feasible; and
- 94 (i) include a process for sharing data with tribal education leaders.
- 95 (3) Before adoption of the state plan, the state board shall present the proposed state plan to

96 the Native American Legislative Liaison Committee.
97 (4) In developing the state plan, the state board shall engage in meaningful consultation
98 with stakeholders and tribal leaders within the state in a manner consistent with the
99 Every Student Succeeds Act, Pub. L. No. 114-95, 20 U.S.C. Sec. 6301 et seq.
100 **Section 5. Effective Date.**
101 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.