

**Digital Literacy Amendments**

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Jordan D. Teuscher**

Senate Sponsor:

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**LONG TITLE****General Description:**

This bill requires high school students to complete a half-credit digital literacy course to graduate.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

- creates a requirement for digital literacy education;
- defines digital literacy concepts including social media awareness and artificial intelligence literacy;
- requires integration of digital literacy throughout k-12 education;
- establishes a specific graduation requirement course for high school students;
- mandates a half-credit digital literacy course for graduation;
- requires end-of-course assessments for the graduation requirement and an opt-out for the assessment;
- creates a task force to oversee digital literacy education;
- sets an implementation timeline for new graduation requirements; and
- makes technical changes.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

AMENDS:

**53E-4-204**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 142

**53G-7-501**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 382

ENACTS:

**53E-4-208**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

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

Section 1. Section **53E-4-204** is amended to read:

**53E-4-204 . Standards and graduation requirements.**

- (1) The state board shall establish rigorous core standards ~~[for Utah public schools]~~ and graduation requirements under Section 53E-3-501 for grades 9 through 12 that:
- (a) are consistent with state law and federal regulations;
  - (b) use competency-based standards and assessments;
  - (c) in accordance with Section 53E-3-505, include instruction that stresses general financial literacy from basic budgeting to financial investments, including bankruptcy education and a general financial literacy test-out option;
  - (d) include graduation requirements in language arts, mathematics, and science that exceed:
    - (i) 3.0 units in language arts including up to 0.5 units emphasizing verbal communication completed in a course or a school sponsored activity;
    - (ii) 2.0 units in mathematics; and
    - (iii) ~~[and]~~ 2.0 units in science; ~~[and]~~
  - (e) include a graduation requirement in social studies that is equal to or exceeds 3.5 units, including at least 1.0 unit in American constitutional government and citizenship as described in Section 53E-4-205.2;
  - (f) ensure up to 0.5 units described in Subsection (1)(e) may be earned by:
    - (i) completing a course or a school sponsored activity emphasizing verbal communication provided that a significant portion of the course or activity is dedicated to civic education, including:
      - (A) policy analysis;
      - (B) governmental systems; and
      - (C) civic engagement; or
    - (ii) participation in the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps described in 10 U.S.C. Sec. 2031[-] ; and
  - (g) include a graduation requirement of 0.5 units in digital literacy, administered through the general digital literacy course established in Section 53E-4-208 that stresses general digital literacy from basic digital citizenship to artificial intelligence awareness, including digital wellness education and a general digital literacy test-out option.
- (2) The state board shall establish competency-based standards and assessments for elective

65 courses.

66 (3) The state board shall study requiring all LEAs to issue a high school diploma to students  
67 who receive:

68 (a) an associate's degree with at least 60 credit hours from an accredited post-secondary  
69 institution; or

70 (b) an industry certification with at least 500 hours of instruction from a business, trade  
71 association, or other industry group in accordance with Section 53E-3-501.

72 (4) New graduation requirements the Legislature adds to this section shall be implemented  
73 for the incoming freshman class one school year after the next full school year following  
74 passage of the legislation creating the new graduation requirement unless otherwise  
75 specified in the legislation.

76 Section 2. Section **53E-4-208** is enacted to read:

77 **53E-4-208 . Digital literacy education and course standards.**

78 (1) As used in this section:

79 (a) "Digital literacy activities" include activities related to the topics listed in Subsection  
80 (1)(b).

81 (b) "Digital literacy concepts" include concepts related to the following topics:

82 (i) digital citizenship and online ethics as foundational principles for participation in  
83 digital society;

84 (ii) social media awareness and healthy usage patterns, including short-form video  
85 platforms and understanding the impact of social media on mental health,  
86 relationships, and civic discourse;

87 (iii) artificial intelligence literacy, including understanding artificial intelligence  
88 capabilities, limitations, ethical considerations, and societal implications;

89 (iv) digital privacy and data protection rights and responsibilities;

90 (v) cybersecurity fundamentals and safe online practices for personal and civic  
91 security;

92 (vi) identifying and evaluating digital information credibility, misinformation, and  
93 media manipulation across digital and traditional media formats;

94 (vii) digital footprint awareness and reputation management in personal and  
95 professional contexts;

96 (viii) online communication skills, digital etiquette, and constructive digital discourse;

97 (ix) understanding algorithms and the algorithms' influence on digital experiences  
98 and information access;

- (x) digital wellness and screen time management for physical and mental health, including understanding the symptoms of problematic or addictive media use;
- (xi) cyberbullying prevention, response, and the promotion of positive digital communities;
- (xii) intellectual property rights, fair use, and creative commons in digital environments;
- (xiii) digital accessibility and inclusive design principles;
- (xiv) emerging technology awareness and adaptation skills;
- (xv) critical thinking in digital environments and information evaluation;
- (xvi) digital content creation and responsible sharing practices;
- (xvii) traditional and digital media literacy, including critical evaluation of television, film, music, streaming content, and short-form video platforms; and
- (xviii) economic and career implications of digital literacy in a technology-driven society.
- (c) "General digital literacy course" means the course of instruction administered by the state board under Subsection (3) to fulfill the graduation requirement established in Section 53E-4-204.
- (2) Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, the state board shall:
- (a) more fully integrate existing and new digital literacy education, including digital literacy concepts, into instruction in kindergarten through grade 12 by:
- (i) coordinating digital literacy instruction with existing instruction in other areas of the core standards, such as language arts, social studies, and career and technical education;
- (ii) using curriculum mapping;
- (iii) creating training materials and staff development programs that:
- (A) highlight areas of potential coordination between digital literacy education and other core standards; and
- (B) demonstrate specific examples of digital literacy concepts as a way of teaching other core standards; and
- (iv) using appropriate digital literacy assessments to improve digital literacy education and, if necessary, developing assessments;
- (b) work with interested public, private, and nonprofit entities to:
- (i) identify, and make available to teachers, online resources for digital literacy education, including modules with interactive activities and turnkey instructor

- resources;
- (ii) coordinate school use of existing digital literacy education resources;
  - (iii) develop simple, clear, and consistent messaging to reinforce and link existing digital literacy resources;
  - (iv) coordinate the efforts of school, work, private, nonprofit, and other digital education providers in implementing methods of appropriately communicating to teachers, students, and parents key digital literacy messages; and
  - (v) encourage parents and students to engage in ongoing digital wellness practices and family digital citizenship;
- (c) in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, make rules to develop guidelines and methods for an LEA to more fully integrate digital literacy education into other core standards; and
- (d) in cooperation with LEAs and interested private and nonprofit entities, provide opportunities for professional development in digital literacy concepts to teachers, including:
- (i) a statewide learning community for digital literacy;
  - (ii) summer workshops; and
  - (iii) online videos of experts in the field of digital literacy education.
- (3) Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, the state board shall:
- (a) administer a general digital literacy course in the same manner that the state board administers other core standards for courses in grades 9 through 12 to fulfill the graduation requirement established in Section 53E-4-204;
  - (b) adopt standards and objectives for the general digital literacy course that address:
    - (i) digital literacy concepts as defined in Subsection (1)(b);
    - (ii) age-appropriate social media literacy and healthy usage strategies, including recognition of social media's impact on mental health and civic discourse;
    - (iii) artificial intelligence awareness and ethical interaction, including understanding artificial intelligence's role in information filtering and decision-making;
    - (iv) digital wellness and mental health considerations in digital environments;
    - (v) technology that relates to digital citizenship, privacy, and security;
    - (vi) critical evaluation of digital information sources and media literacy skills necessary for informed digital citizenship; and
    - (vii) practical application of digital literacy skills required for responsible participation in digital society and fulfillment of the graduation requirement under

- 167           Section 53E-4-204; and
- 168       (c)(i) develop an online, end-of-course assessment for the general digital literacy
- 169           course required for graduation under Section 53E-4-204;
- 170       (ii) require an LEA to administer an online, end-of-course assessment to a student
- 171           who takes the general digital literacy course to fulfill the graduation requirement;
- 172           and
- 173       (iii) develop a plan, through the state superintendent, to analyze the results of an
- 174           online, end-of-course assessment in general digital literacy that includes:
- 175           (A) an analysis of assessment results by standard; and
- 176           (B) average scores statewide and by school district and school.
- 177       (4)(a) The state board shall establish a task force to study and make recommendations to
- 178           the state board on how to improve digital literacy education in the public school
- 179           system, including both the general integration of digital literacy concepts throughout
- 180           K-12 education and the specific graduation requirement course.
- 181       (b) The chair of the state board shall select the task force membership, which shall
- 182           include representatives of:
- 183           (i) the state board;
- 184           (ii) LEAs;
- 185           (iii) the Utah System of Higher Education;
- 186           (iv) individuals with expertise in:
- 187           (A) child development; and
- 188           (B) media related specialties; and
- 189           (v) private or public entities that teach digital literacy and share a commitment to
- 190           empower individuals and families to achieve digital wellness, safety, and
- 191           responsible technology use.
- 192       (c) The state board shall convene the task force at least once every three years to review
- 193           and recommend adjustments to the standards and objectives of the general digital
- 194           literacy course and the integration of digital literacy concepts throughout K-12
- 195           education.

196       Section 3. Section **53G-7-501** is amended to read:

197       **53G-7-501 . Definitions.**

198       As used in this part:

- 199       (1)(a) "Common education expense" means an expense an LEA incurs that is related to
- 200           the delivery of instruction for all courses, unrelated to a specific course, program, or

activity.

(b) "Common education expense" includes the employment of educators and staff, the provision of capital facilities, and operation and maintenance costs.

(2)(a) "Course" means an activity, a course, or a program that an LEA:

(i) intends to deliver instruction;

(ii) provides, sponsors, or supports; and

(iii) conducts primarily during school hours.

(b) "Course" includes a course in which a student is required to enroll as a condition of participation in a separate extracurricular activity.

(3) "Discretionary project" means a project that a student completes in lieu of or in addition to a required classroom project in accordance with Section 53G-7-503.

(4) "Elementary school" means a school that provides instruction to students in grades kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6.

(5)(a) "Elementary school student" means a student enrolled in an elementary school.

(b) "Elementary school student" does not include a secondary school student.

(6)(a) "Extracurricular activity" means an activity or a program that:

(i) is not a course; and

(ii) an LEA provides, sponsors, or supports.

(b) "Extracurricular activity" does not include a noncurricular club as defined in Section 53G-7-701.

(7)(a) "Fee" means a charge, expense, deposit, rental, or payment:

(i) regardless of how an LEA terms, describes, requests, or requires the charge, expense, deposit, rental, or payment, directly or indirectly;

(ii) in the form of money, goods, or services; and

(iii) that is a condition to a student's full participation in or admission to an activity, course, or program that an LEA provides, sponsors, or supports.

(b) "Fee" includes:

(i) payments to a third party that provides a part of a school activity, class, or program; and

(ii) a fine other than a fine described in Subsection (7)(c)(i).

(c) "Fee" does not include:

(i) a student fine that an LEA approves for:

(A) failing to return school property;

(B) losing, wasting, or damaging private or school property through intentional,

- 235                   careless, or irresponsible behavior, including defacing or damaging school  
236                   property as described in Section 53G-8-212; or  
237                   (C) improper use of school property, including a parking violation;  
238               (ii) a payment for school breakfast or lunch;  
239               (iii) a deposit that:  
240                   (A) is a pledge securing the return of school property; and  
241                   (B) the LEA or school refunds upon the return of the school property;  
242               (iv) a charge for insurance, unless the insurance is required for a student to participate  
243                   in an activity, course, or program; or  
244               (v) money or another item of monetary value that a student or the student's family  
245                   raises through fundraising.
- 246       (8) "Fee course" means a course that is not a non-fee course.
- 247       (9)(a) "Fundraising" means an activity or event that:  
248               (i) an LEA provides, sponsors, or supports; and  
249               (ii) uses students to generate funds or raise money to:  
250                   (A) provide financial support to a school or a school's class, group, team, or  
251                   program; or  
252                   (B) benefit a particular charity or for other charitable purposes.
- 253       (b) "Fundraising" does not include an alternative method of raising revenue without  
254               students.
- 255       (10)(a) "Instructional equipment" means an activity-, course-, or program-related tool  
256               that:  
257               (i) a student is required to use as part of an activity, course, or program in a  
258                   secondary school; and  
259               (ii) becomes the property of the student upon exiting the activity, course, or program.
- 260       (b) "Instructional equipment" does not include:  
261               (i) school equipment;  
262               (ii) an instructional supply; or  
263               (iii) a personal student supply for a secondary student.
- 264       (11)(a) "Instructional supply" means a non-reusable or a consumable material or supply  
265               that is necessary to use, expend, or deplete as a component or element of an activity,  
266               course, or program in a secondary school.
- 267       (b) "Instructional supply" does not include a personal student supply for a secondary  
268               student.



(12) "Non-fee course" means a course that results in course credit or a course grade within the core standards the state board establishes under Section 53E-4-202 and other statutory requirements for:

- (a) English language arts;
- (b) health education;
- (c) mathematics;
- (d) science;
- (e) digital literacy as described in Section 53E-4-208;
- (f) financial literacy as described in Section 53E-3-505; and
- ~~[(e)]~~ (g) social studies.

(13)(a) "Personal student supply" means, for a secondary student, an object, tool, material, or supply that:

- (i) is the personal property of the student;
- (ii) regardless of the use of the supply in the instructional process, individuals not enrolled in the course or activity also commonly purchase and use; and
- (iii) has a high probability of regular use in activities other than school-sponsored activities.

(b) "Personal student supply" includes pencils, papers, notebooks, crayons, scissors, and basic clothing.

(14)(a) "School activity clothing" means special shoes or items of clothing that:

- (i) meet specific requirements, including requesting a specific brand, fabric, or imprint;
- (ii) a school requires a student to provide and to wear for an activity-, course-, or program-related activity; and
- (iii)(A) the student rents while participating in the activity; or  
(B) become the property of the student upon exiting the activity, course, or program.

(b) "School activity clothing" does not include:

- (i) a school uniform; or
- (ii) clothing that is commonly found in students' homes.

(15) "School equipment" means a machine, equipment, facility, or tool that:

- (a) is durable;
- (b) is reusable;
- (c) a secondary school owns; and

(d) a student uses as part of an activity, course, or program in a secondary school.

(16)(a) "School uniform" means special shoes or an item of clothing that:

(i)(A) meets specific requirements, including a requested specific color, style, fabric, or imprint; and

(B) a school requires a student to provide and wear during school attendance; and

(ii) is the property of the student.

(b) "School uniform" does not include school activity clothing.

(17) "Secondary school" means a school that provides instruction to students in grades 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, or 12.

(18) "Secondary school student":

(a) means a student enrolled in a secondary school; and

(b) includes a student in grade 6 if the student attends a secondary school.

(19)(a) "Textbook" means instructional material necessary for participation in an activity, course, or program, regardless of the format of the material.

(b) "Textbook" includes:

(i) a hardcopy book or printed pages of instructional material, including a consumable workbook; or

(ii) computer hardware, software, or digital content.

(c) "Textbook" does not include school equipment, instructional equipment, or instructional supplies.

(20) "Waiver" means a full release from:

(a) a requirement to pay a fee; and

(b) any provision in lieu of fee payment.

#### Section 4. **Effective Date.**

This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.