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Digital Literacy Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Jordan D. Teuscher

Senate Sponsor:

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LONG TITLE

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General Description:

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

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Highlighted Provisions:

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This bill:

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- ▶ 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.

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Money Appropriated in this Bill:

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None

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Other Special Clauses:

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None

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Utah Code Sections Affected:

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AMENDS:

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

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

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ENACTS:

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53E-4-208, Utah Code Annotated 1953

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H.B. 218

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

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

33 **53E-4-204 . Standards and graduation requirements.**

- 34 (1) The state board shall establish rigorous core standards [for Utah public schools] and
35 graduation requirements under Section 53E-3-501 for grades 9 through 12 that:
36 (a) are consistent with state law and federal regulations;
37 (b) use competency-based standards and assessments;
38 (c) in accordance with Section 53E-3-505, include instruction that stresses general
39 financial literacy from basic budgeting to financial investments, including bankruptcy
40 education and a general financial literacy test-out option;
41 (d) include graduation requirements in language arts, mathematics, and science that
42 exceed:
43 (i) 3.0 units in language arts including up to 0.5 units emphasizing verbal
44 communication completed in a course or a school sponsored activity;
45 (ii) 2.0 units in mathematics; and
46 (iii) [and] 2.0 units in science; [and]
47 (e) include a graduation requirement in social studies that is equal to or exceeds 3.5
48 units, including at least 1.0 unit in American constitutional government and
49 citizenship as described in Section 53E-4-205.2;
50 (f) ensure up to 0.5 units described in Subsection (1)(e) may be earned by:
51 (i) completing a course or a school sponsored activity emphasizing verbal
52 communication provided that a significant portion of the course or activity is
53 dedicated to civic education, including:
54 (A) policy analysis;
55 (B) governmental systems; and
56 (C) civic engagement; or
57 (ii) participation in the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps described in 10 U.S.C.
58 Sec. 2031[.] ; and
59 (g) include a graduation requirement of 0.5 units in digital literacy, administered through
60 the general digital literacy course established in Section 53E-4-208 that stresses
61 general digital literacy from basic digital citizenship to artificial intelligence
62 awareness, including digital wellness education and a general digital literacy test-out
63 option.
64 (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;

- 99 (x) digital wellness and screen time management for physical and mental health, including understanding the symptoms of problematic or addictive media use;
100 (xi) cyberbullying prevention, response, and the promotion of positive digital communities;
101 (xii) intellectual property rights, fair use, and creative commons in digital environments;
102 (xiii) digital accessibility and inclusive design principles;
103 (xiv) emerging technology awareness and adaptation skills;
104 (xv) critical thinking in digital environments and information evaluation;
105 (xvi) digital content creation and responsible sharing practices;
106 (xvii) traditional and digital media literacy, including critical evaluation of television, film, music, streaming content, and short-form video platforms; and
107 (xviii) economic and career implications of digital literacy in a technology-driven society.

113 (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.

116 (2) Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, the state board shall:

- 117 (a) more fully integrate existing and new digital literacy education, including digital literacy concepts, into instruction in kindergarten through grade 12 by:
118 (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;
119 (ii) using curriculum mapping;
120 (iii) creating training materials and staff development programs that:
121 (A) highlight areas of potential coordination between digital literacy education and other core standards; and
122 (B) demonstrate specific examples of digital literacy concepts as a way of teaching other core standards; and
123 (iv) using appropriate digital literacy assessments to improve digital literacy education and, if necessary, developing assessments;
124 (b) work with interested public, private, and nonprofit entities to:
125 (i) identify, and make available to teachers, online resources for digital literacy education, including modules with interactive activities and turnkey instructor

133 resources;

- 134 (ii) coordinate school use of existing digital literacy education resources;
- 135 (iii) develop simple, clear, and consistent messaging to reinforce and link existing
136 digital literacy resources;
- 137 (iv) coordinate the efforts of school, work, private, nonprofit, and other digital
138 education providers in implementing methods of appropriately communicating to
139 teachers, students, and parents key digital literacy messages; and
- 140 (v) encourage parents and students to engage in ongoing digital wellness practices
141 and family digital citizenship;
- 142 (c) in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act,
143 make rules to develop guidelines and methods for an LEA to more fully integrate
144 digital literacy education into other core standards; and
- 145 (d) in cooperation with LEAs and interested private and nonprofit entities, provide
146 opportunities for professional development in digital literacy concepts to teachers,
147 including:
- 148 (i) a statewide learning community for digital literacy;
- 149 (ii) summer workshops; and
- 150 (iii) online videos of experts in the field of digital literacy education.

151 (3) Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, the state board shall:

- 152 (a) administer a general digital literacy course in the same manner that the state board
153 administers other core standards for courses in grades 9 through 12 to fulfill the
154 graduation requirement established in Section 53E-4-204;
- 155 (b) adopt standards and objectives for the general digital literacy course that address:
- 156 (i) digital literacy concepts as defined in Subsection (1)(b);
- 157 (ii) age-appropriate social media literacy and healthy usage strategies, including
158 recognition of social media's impact on mental health and civic discourse;
- 159 (iii) artificial intelligence awareness and ethical interaction, including understanding
160 artificial intelligence's role in information filtering and decision-making;
- 161 (iv) digital wellness and mental health considerations in digital environments;
- 162 (v) technology that relates to digital citizenship, privacy, and security;
- 163 (vi) critical evaluation of digital information sources and media literacy skills
164 necessary for informed digital citizenship; and
- 165 (vii) practical application of digital literacy skills required for responsible
166 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

201 activity.

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

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

- 205 (i) intends to deliver instruction;
- 206 (ii) provides, sponsors, or supports; and
- 207 (iii) conducts primarily during school hours.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 217 (i) is not a course; and
- 218 (ii) an LEA provides, sponsors, or supports.

219 (b) "Extracurricular activity" does not include a noncurricular club as defined in Section
220 53G-7-701.

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

- 222 (i) regardless of how an LEA terms, describes, requests, or requires the charge,
223 expense, deposit, rental, or payment, directly or indirectly;
- 224 (ii) in the form of money, goods, or services; and
- 225 (iii) that is a condition to a student's full participation in or admission to an activity,
226 course, or program that an LEA provides, sponsors, or supports.

227 (b) "Fee" includes:

- 228 (i) payments to a third party that provides a part of a school activity, class, or
229 program; and
- 230 (ii) a fine other than a fine described in Subsection (7)(c)(i).

231 (c) "Fee" does not include:

- 232 (i) a student fine that an LEA approves for:
 - 233 (A) failing to return school property;
 - 234 (B) losing, wasting, or damaging private or school property through intentional,

careless, or irresponsible behavior, including defacing or damaging school property as described in Section 53G-8-212; or

(C) improper use of school property, including a parking violation;

(ii) a payment for school breakfast or lunch;

(iii) a deposit that:

(A) is a pledge securing the return of school property; and

(B) the LEA or school refunds upon the return of the school property;

- (iv) a charge for insurance, unless the insurance is required for a student to participate in an activity, course, or program; or

(v) money or another item of monetary value that a student or the student's family raises through fundraising.

(8) "Fee course" means a course that is not a non-fee course.

(9)(a) "Fundraising" means an activity or event that:

(i) an LEA provides, sponsors, or supports; and

(ii) uses students to generate funds or raise money to:

(A) provide financial support to a school or a school's class, group, team, or program; or

(B) benefit a particular charity or for other charitable purposes.

(b) "Fundraising" does not include an alternative method of raising revenue without students.

(10)(a) "Instructional equipment" means an activity-, course-, or program-related tool that:

- (i) a student is required to use as part of an activity, course, or program in a secondary school; and

(ii) becomes the property of the student upon exiting the activity, course, or program.

(b) "Instructional equipment" does not include:

(i) school equipment;

(ii) an instructional supply; or

(iii) a personal student supply for a secondary student.

(11)(a) "Instructional supply" means a non-reusable or a consumable material or supply that is necessary to use, expend, or deplete as a component or element of an activity, course, or program in a secondary school.

(b) "Instructional supply" does not include a personal student supply for a secondary student.

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

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

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

- 281 (i) is the personal property of the student;
282 (ii) regardless of the use of the supply in the instructional process, individuals not
283 enrolled in the course or activity also commonly purchase and use; and
284 (iii) has a high probability of regular use in activities other than school-sponsored
285 activities.
- 286 (b) "Personal student supply" includes pencils, papers, notebooks, crayons, scissors, and
287 basic clothing.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

308 (ii) is the property of the student.

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

310 (17) "Secondary school" means a school that provides instruction to students in grades 7, 8,

311 9, 10, 11, or 12.

312 (18) "Secondary school student":

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

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

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

317 (b) "Textbook" includes:

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

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

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

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

324 (a) a requirement to pay a fee; and

325 (b) any provision in lieu of fee payment.

326 **Section 4. Effective Date.**

327 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.