

Jordan D. Teuscher proposes the following substitute bill:

Digital Skills Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Jordan D. Teuscher

Senate Sponsor:

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill changes the requirements for the existing grades 7 and 8 required digital course.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- creates requirements for the digital skills course;
 - defines digital skills concepts;
 - creates an advisory tech council to advise on technology related courses and education;
- and
- makes technical changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

53F-2-510, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, First Special Session, Chapter 9

ENACTS:

53E-4-208, Utah Code Annotated 1953

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

Section 1. Section **53E-4-208** is enacted to read:

53E-4-208 . Digital skills education and course standards.

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Digital skills activities" include activities related to the topics listed in Subsection

(1)(b).

- (b) "Digital skills concepts" include concepts related to the following topics:
- (i) digital protection and online ethics as foundational principles for participation in digital society;
 - (ii) social media awareness and healthy usage patterns, including short-form video platforms and understanding the impact of social media on mental health, relationships, and civic discourse;
 - (iii) artificial intelligence literacy, including understanding artificial intelligence capabilities, limitations, ethical considerations, and societal implications;
 - (iv) digital privacy and data protection rights and responsibilities;
 - (v) cybersecurity fundamentals and safe online practices for personal and civic security;
 - (vi) identifying and evaluating digital information credibility, misinformation, and media manipulation across digital and traditional media formats;
 - (vii) digital footprint awareness and reputation management in personal and professional contexts;
 - (viii) online communication skills, digital etiquette, and constructive digital discourse;
 - (ix) understanding algorithms and the algorithms' influence on digital experiences and information access;
 - (x) 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) "Digital skills course" means a course offered in grade 7 or 8 that incorporates digital skills concepts.

- (2) Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, the state board shall offer a digital skills course taught in grade 7 or 8.
- (3)(a) The state superintendent may establish an advisory tech council to provide guidance and recommendations on technology education in the state's public education system.
- (b) The advisory tech council established under Subsection (3)(a) shall include membership the state superintendent selects.
- (c) The advisory tech council may:
- (i) review and recommend standards and objectives for the digital skills course and other technology related education;
 - (ii) identify effective digital skills curriculum and instructional resources;
 - (iii) recommend professional development opportunities for educators teaching digital skills;
 - (iv) advise on emerging technologies and trends that should be incorporated into digital skills education;
 - (v) coordinate with interested public, private, and nonprofit entities to improve digital skills education; and
 - (vi) make recommendations to the state board on methods to assess student proficiency in digital skills.

Section 2. Section **53F-2-510** is amended to read:

53F-2-510 . Digital Teaching and Learning Grant Program.

- (1) As used in this section:
- ~~[(a) "Advisory committee" means the committee established by the state board under Subsection (6)(b).]~~
- ~~[(b)]~~ (a) "Digital readiness assessment" means an assessment provided by the state board that:
- (i) is completed by an LEA analyzing an LEA's readiness to incorporate comprehensive digital teaching and learning; and
 - (ii) informs the preparation of an LEA's plan for incorporating comprehensive digital teaching and learning.
- ~~[(e)]~~ (b) "High quality professional learning" means the professional learning standards described in Section 53G-11-303.
- ~~[(d)]~~ (c) "Implementation assessment" means an assessment that analyzes an LEA's implementation of an LEA plan, including identifying areas for improvement,

obstacles to implementation, progress toward the achievement of stated goals, and recommendations going forward.

~~[(e)]~~ (d) "LEA plan" means an LEA's plan to implement a digital teaching and learning program that meets the requirements of this section and requirements set forth by the state board and the advisory committee.

~~[(f)]~~ (e) "Program" means the Digital Teaching and Learning Grant Program created and described in Subsections ~~[(5)]~~ (4) through ~~[(10)]~~ (9).

~~[(g)]~~ (f) "Utah Education and Telehealth Network" or "UETN" means the Utah Education and Telehealth Network created in Section 53H-4-213.4.

~~[(2)(a) The state board shall establish a digital teaching and learning task force to develop a funding proposal to present to the Legislature for digital teaching and learning in elementary and secondary schools.]~~

~~[(b) The digital teaching and learning task force shall include representatives of:]~~

~~[(i) the state board;]~~

~~[(ii) UETN;]~~

~~[(iii) LEAs; and]~~

~~[(iv) the Governor's Education Excellence Commission.]~~

~~[(3)]~~ (2) As funding allows, the state board shall develop a master plan for a statewide digital teaching and learning program, including the following:

(a) a statement of purpose that describes the objectives or goals the state board will accomplish by implementing a digital teaching and learning program;

(b) a forecast for fundamental components needed to implement a digital teaching and learning program, including a forecast for:

(i) student and teacher devices;

(ii) Wi-Fi and wireless compatible technology;

(iii) curriculum software;

(iv) assessment solutions;

(v) technical support;

(vi) change management of LEAs;

(vii) high quality professional learning;

(viii) Internet delivery and capacity; and

(ix) security and privacy of users;

(c) a determination of the requirements for:

(i) statewide technology infrastructure; and

- (ii) local LEA technology infrastructure;
- (d) standards for high quality professional learning related to implementing and maintaining a digital teaching and learning program;
- (e) a statewide technical support plan that will guide the implementation and maintenance of a digital teaching and learning program, including standards and competency requirements for technical support personnel;
- (f)(i) a grant program for LEAs; or
- (ii) a distribution formula to fund LEA digital teaching and learning programs;
- (g) in consultation with UETN, an inventory of the state public education system's current technology resources and other items and a plan to integrate those resources into a digital teaching and learning program;
- (h) an ongoing evaluation process that is overseen by the state board;
- (i) proposed rules that incorporate the principles of the master plan into the state's public education system as a whole; and
- (j) a plan to ensure long-term sustainability that:
 - (i) accounts for the financial impacts of a digital teaching and learning program; and
 - (ii) facilitates the redirection of LEA savings that arise from implementing a digital teaching and learning program.

~~[(4)]~~ (3) UETN shall:

- (a) in consultation with the state board, conduct an inventory of the state public education system's current technology resources and other items as determined by UETN, including software;
- (b) perform an engineering study to determine the technology infrastructure needs of the public education system to implement a digital teaching and learning program, including the infrastructure needed for the state board, UETN, and LEAs; and
- (c) as funding allows, provide infrastructure and technology support for school districts and charter schools.

~~[(5)]~~ (4) There is created the Digital Teaching and Learning Grant Program to improve educational outcomes in public schools by effectively incorporating comprehensive digital teaching and learning technology.

~~[(6)]~~ (5) The state board shall:

- (a) in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, adopt rules for the administration of the program, including rules requiring:
 - (i) an LEA to complete a digital readiness assessment the first time an LEA applies

- 165 for the grant;
- 166 (ii) measures to ensure that the LEA monitors and implements technology with best
- 167 practices; and
- 168 (iii) robust goals for learning outcomes and appropriate measurements of goal
- 169 achievement; and
- 170 ~~[(b) establish an advisory committee to make recommendations on the program and~~
- 171 ~~LEA plan requirements and report to the state board; and]~~
- 172 [(e)] (b) in accordance with this section, approve LEA plans and award grants.
- 173 [(7)] (6)(a) The state board shall, subject to legislative appropriations, award a grant to an
- 174 LEA:
- 175 (i) that submits an LEA plan that meets the requirements described in Subsection (8);
- 176 and
- 177 (ii) for which the LEA's leadership and management members have completed a
- 178 digital teaching and learning leadership and implementation training as provided
- 179 in Subsection ~~[(7)(b)]~~ (6)(b).
- 180 (b) The state board or its designee shall provide the training described in Subsection [
- 181 ~~(7)(a)(ii)]~~ (6)(a)(ii).
- 182 [(8)] (7) The state board shall establish requirements of an LEA plan that shall include:
- 183 (a) the results of the LEA's digital readiness assessment and a proposal to remedy an
- 184 obstacle to implementation or other issues identified in the assessment;
- 185 (b) high quality professional learning for educators in the use of digital teaching and
- 186 learning technology;
- 187 (c) leadership training and management restructuring, if necessary, for successful
- 188 implementation;
- 189 (d) targets for improved student achievement, student learning, and college readiness
- 190 through digital teaching and learning; and
- 191 (e) any other requirement established by the state board in rule made in accordance with
- 192 Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, including an application
- 193 process and metrics to analyze the quality of a proposed LEA plan.
- 194 [(9)] (8) The state board or the state board's designee shall establish an interactive dashboard
- 195 available to each LEA that is awarded a grant for the LEA to track and report the LEA's
- 196 long-term, intermediate, and direct outcomes in real time and for the LEA to use to
- 197 create customized reports.
- 198 [(10)] (9)(a) There is no federal funding, federal requirement, federal education

199 agreement, or national program included or related to this state adopted program.

200 (b) Any inclusion of federal funding, federal requirement, federal education agreement,
201 or national program shall require separate express approval as provided in Title 53E,
202 Chapter 3, Part 8, Implementing Federal or National Education Programs.

203 ~~[(11)]~~ (10) In accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 6a, Utah Procurement Code, the state
204 board shall contract with an independent evaluator to:

- 205 (a) support each LEA that receives a grant as part of the program to complete an
206 implementation assessment for each year that the LEA participates;
- 207 (b) report the findings of an implementation assessment to the state board; and
- 208 (c) submit to the state board recommendations to resolve issues that an implementation
209 assessment raises.

210 ~~[(12)]~~ (11) The state board or the state board's designee shall review an implementation
211 assessment and review each participating LEA's progress from the previous year, as
212 applicable.

213 ~~[(13)]~~ (12) The state board shall establish interventions for an LEA that does not make
214 progress on implementation of the LEA's implementation plan, including:

- 215 (a) nonrenewal of, or time period extensions for, the LEA's grant;
- 216 (b) reduction of funds; or
- 217 (c) other interventions to assist the LEA.

218 ~~[(14)]~~ (13)(a) To implement an LEA plan, a contract, in accordance with Title 63G,
219 Chapter 6a, Utah Procurement Code, or other agreement with one or more providers
220 of technology powered learning solutions and one or more providers of wireless
221 networking solutions may be entered into by:

- 222 (i) UETN, in cooperation with or on behalf of, as applicable, the state board, the state
223 board's designee, or an LEA; or
- 224 (ii) an LEA.
- 225 (b) A contract or agreement entered into under Subsection ~~[(14)(a)]~~ (13)(a) may be a
226 contract or agreement that:
 - 227 (i) UETN enters into with a provider and payment for services is directly
228 appropriated by the Legislature, as funds are available, to UETN;
 - 229 (ii) UETN enters into with a provider and pays for the provider's services and is
230 reimbursed for payments by an LEA that benefits from the services;
 - 231 (iii) UETN negotiates the terms of on behalf of an LEA that enters into the contract
232 or agreement directly with the provider and the LEA pays directly for the

- 233 provider's services; or
- 234 (iv) an LEA enters into directly, pays a provider, and receives preapproved
- 235 reimbursement from a UETN fund established for this purpose.
- 236 (c) If an LEA does not reimburse UETN in a reasonable time for services received under
- 237 a contract or agreement described in Subsection [(14)(b)] (13)(b), the state board shall
- 238 pay the balance due to UETN from the LEA's funds received under Chapter 2, State
- 239 Funding -- Minimum School Program.
- 240 (d) If UETN negotiates or enters into an agreement as described in Subsection [
- 241 (14)(b)(ii)] (13)(b)(ii) or [(14)(b)(iii)] (13)(b)(iii), and UETN enters into an additional
- 242 agreement with an LEA that is associated with the agreement described in Subsection [
- 243 (14)(b)(ii)] (13)(b)(ii) or [(14)(b)(iii)] (13)(b)(iii), the associated agreement may be
- 244 treated by UETN and the LEA as a cooperative procurement, as that term is defined
- 245 in Section 63G-6a-103, regardless of whether the associated agreement satisfies the
- 246 requirements of Section 63G-6a-2105.
- 247 **Section 3. Effective Date.**
- 248 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.