

Ken Ivory proposes the following substitute bill:

Civics Education Modifications

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Ken Ivory

Senate Sponsor:

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill establishes requirements for instruction on foundational United States civics documents.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- requires the State Board of Education to establish core standards for spiral instruction on foundational United States civics documents in kindergarten through grade 12;
- defines the foundational documents subject to spiral instruction requirements;
- establishes requirements for instruction that increases in complexity each year;
- directs local education agencies to implement curriculum aligned with spiral instruction standards; and
- makes technical and conforming changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

53E-4-202 (Effective 05/06/26) (Partially Repealed 01/01/28), as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Third Special Session, Chapter 5

ENACTS:

53G-10-308 (Effective 05/06/26), Utah Code Annotated 1953

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

Section 1. Section **53E-4-202** is amended to read:

53E-4-202 (Effective 05/06/26) (Partially Repealed 01/01/28). Core standards for Utah public schools -- Notice and hearing requirements.

- (1)(a) In establishing minimum standards related to curriculum and instruction requirements under Section 53E-3-501, the state board shall, in consultation with local school boards, school superintendents, teachers, employers, and parents implement core standards for Utah public schools that will enable students to, among other objectives:
- (i) communicate effectively, both verbally and through written communication;
 - (ii) apply mathematics; [and]
 - (iii) access, analyze, and apply information[-] ; and
 - (iv) demonstrate knowledge of foundational United States civics documents as described in Section 53E-10-308.
- (b) Except as provided in this public education code, the state board may recommend but may not require a local school board or charter school governing board to use:
- (i) a particular curriculum or instructional material; or
 - (ii) a model curriculum or instructional material.
- (2) The state board shall, in establishing the core standards for Utah public schools:
- (a) identify the basic knowledge, skills, and competencies each student is expected to acquire or master as the student advances through the public education system; and
 - (b) align with each other the core standards for Utah public schools and the assessments described in Section 53E-4-303.
- (3) The basic knowledge, skills, and competencies identified pursuant to Subsection (2)(a) shall increase in depth and complexity from year to year and focus on consistent and continual progress within and between grade levels and courses in the basic academic areas of:
- (a) English, including explicit phonics, spelling, grammar, reading, writing, vocabulary, speech, and listening; [and]
 - (b) mathematics, including basic computational skills[-] ; and
 - (c) social studies, including instruction on foundational United States civics documents as described in Section 53E-10-308.
- (4) Before adopting core standards for Utah public schools, the state board shall:
- (a) publicize draft core standards for Utah public schools for the state, as a class A notice under Section 63G-30-102, for at least 90 days;
 - (b) invite public comment on the draft core standards for Utah public schools for a

- 63 period of not less than 90 days; and
- 64 (c) conduct three public hearings that are held in different regions of the state on the
- 65 draft core standards for Utah public schools.
- 66 (5) LEA governing boards shall design their school programs, that are supported by
- 67 generally accepted scientific standards of evidence, to focus on the core standards for
- 68 Utah public schools with the expectation that each program will enhance or help achieve
- 69 mastery of the core standards for Utah public schools.
- 70 (6) Except as provided in Sections 53G-10-103 and 53G-10-402, each school may select
- 71 instructional materials and methods of teaching, that are supported by generally accepted
- 72 scientific standards of evidence, that the school considers most appropriate to meet the
- 73 core standards for Utah public schools.
- 74 (7) The state may exit any agreement, contract, memorandum of understanding, or
- 75 consortium that cedes control of the core standards for Utah public schools to any other
- 76 entity, including a federal agency or consortium, for any reason, including:
- 77 (a) the cost of developing or implementing the core standards for Utah public schools;
- 78 (b) the proposed core standards for Utah public schools are inconsistent with community
- 79 values; or
- 80 (c) the agreement, contract, memorandum of understanding, or consortium:
- 81 (i) was entered into in violation of Chapter 3, Part 8, Implementing Federal or
- 82 National Education Programs, or Title 63J, Chapter 5, Federal Funds Procedures
- 83 Act;
- 84 (ii) conflicts with Utah law;
- 85 (iii) requires Utah student data to be included in a national or multi-state database;
- 86 (iv) requires records of teacher performance to be included in a national or multi-state
- 87 database; or
- 88 (v) imposes curriculum, assessment, or data tracking requirements on home school or
- 89 private school students.
- 90 (8) The state board shall:
- 91 (a) submit a report in accordance with Section 53E-1-203 on the development and
- 92 implementation of the core standards for Utah public schools, including the time line
- 93 established for the review of the core standards for Utah public schools; and
- 94 (b) ensure that the report described in Subsection (8)(a) includes the time line
- 95 established for the review of the core standards for Utah public schools by a
- 96 standards review committee and the recommendations of a standards review

committee established under Section 53E-4-203.

Section 2. Section **53G-10-308** is enacted to read:

53G-10-308 (Effective 05/06/26). Spiral instruction on foundational United States civics documents.

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Foundational document" means:

(i) the Declaration of Independence;

(ii) the Articles of Confederation;

(iii) the United States Constitution;

(iv) the Bill of Rights;

(v) George Washington's Farewell Address; and

(vi) selected passages from The Federalist Papers.

(b) "Spiral instruction" means instruction in which a foundational document is presented to students multiple times throughout the student's education from kindergarten through grade 12, with the content, concepts, and analysis of each foundational document increasing in depth and complexity as the student advances from grade to grade.

(2) Beginning in the 2028-2029 school year, the state board shall establish core standards that require spiral instruction on the foundational documents for students in kindergarten through grade 12.

(3) The state board shall ensure that the core standards for spiral instruction on the foundational documents:

(a) require instruction on each foundational document in each grade from kindergarten through grade 12;

(b) establish learning outcomes that increase in depth and complexity as students advance from grade to grade;

(c) specify that instruction shall focus on:

(i) reading and analyzing the text of each foundational document;

(ii) understanding the historical context in which each foundational document was created;

(iii) identifying the principles contained in each foundational document;

(iv) analyzing the relationship between the foundational documents; and

(v) applying the principles of the foundational documents to current events and civic participation;

- (d) align instruction with the developmental capabilities of students at each grade level;
- (e) ensure that students in each grade level build upon knowledge and skills acquired in previous grades; and
- (f) integrate instruction on the foundational documents with existing social studies core standards.

(4)(a) An LEA shall implement curriculum and instructional materials that align with the core standards for spiral instruction on the foundational documents established under this section.

(b) An LEA shall ensure that curriculum and instructional materials selected under Subsection (4)(a):

- (i) provide for instruction on each foundational document in each grade from kindergarten through grade 12;
- (ii) increase in complexity and analytical depth as students progress through grades;
- (iii) include primary source text from each foundational document; and
- (iv) support students in developing skills in reading, analyzing, and applying the principles contained in the foundational documents.

(5) The state board shall, in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, make rules establishing:

- (a) the minimum amount of instructional time dedicated to spiral instruction on the foundational documents at each grade level;
- (b) assessment methods to measure student knowledge and understanding of the foundational documents at each grade level; and
- (c) reporting requirements for an LEA to demonstrate compliance with this section.

(6) Nothing in this section prohibits an LEA from exceeding the minimum standards established by the state board under this section.

(7) The state board shall, in collaboration with the Civic Thought and Leadership Initiative within the Center for Constitutional Studies at Utah Valley University, develop a plan for standards, professional development, and training to fulfill the requirements of this section and report an implementation plan by the September 2026 Education Interim Committee meeting.

Section 3. **Effective Date.**

This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.