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School Curriculum Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Doug Welton

Senate Sponsor:

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LONG TITLE

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General Description:

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This bill modifies requirements for social studies education in elementary and secondary schools.

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Highlighted Provisions:

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This bill:

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- requires American constitutional government and citizenship to be taught as two distinct semester courses;

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- requires United States history to be taught as two distinct semester courses;

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- prohibits students from taking the same semester course twice to meet graduation

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requirements;

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- requires literacy coaches to support the integration of social studies content into literacy instruction;

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- requires daily social studies instruction for elementary grades;

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- allows a portion of required social studies instruction to be delivered through integrated instruction with English language arts and mathematics;

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- requires local education agencies to implement at least three specified strategies in grades 7 and 8 social studies courses;

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- directs the state board to provide professional development, coaching support, and instructional resources for social studies education;

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- requires annual reporting to the Legislature on social studies instruction compliance and student outcomes;

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- requires implementation by the 2028-29 school year;

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- defines terms; and

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- makes technical changes.

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Money Appropriated in this Bill:

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None

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Other Special Clauses:

31 None

32 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

33 AMENDS:

34 **53E-3-1002**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 285

35 **53E-3-1004**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 285

36 **53E-4-204**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 142

37 ENACTS:

38 **53E-4-205.3**, Utah Code Annotated 1953



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

41 Section 1. Section **53E-3-1002** is amended to read:

42 **53E-3-1002 . Literacy coaching -- Professional learning.**

43 (1) Subject to legislative appropriations, the state board shall provide, train, and assign
44 literacy coaches to schools with low literacy achievement performance to provide early
45 literacy coaching to teachers in kindergarten through grade 3, in accordance with this
46 section.

47 (2) The state board shall make rules, in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah
48 Administrative Rulemaking Act, to:

- 49 (a) establish criteria to determine which schools qualify for early literacy coaching,
50 prioritizing coaching among:
 - 51 (i) schools that participate in partnerships that receive grants under Title 53F, Chapter
52 5, Part 4, Partnerships for Student Success Grant Program; and
 - 53 (ii) schools that fall within the bottom 25% of all schools in literacy achievement
54 performance, as the state board further defines;
- 55 (b) establish minimum qualifications for early literacy coach positions to ensure
56 adequate preparation with necessary expertise;
- 57 (c) define roles and responsibilities for a literacy coach, including:
 - 58 (i) assisting educators in analyzing data to inform instructional adjustments;
 - 59 (ii) engaging in instructional coaching cycles with educators to build capacity for
60 improved classroom instructional practices;
 - 61 (iii) using principles of adult learning to effectively partner with educators to
62 integrate professional learning into classroom practice;
 - 63 (iv) leveraging knowledge of the science of reading and evidence-based practices to
64 support educators in maximizing student learning;

- 65 (v) partnering with a school's leader to support school-wide literacy goals to provide
 66 a team of support for educators to embed the state-wide goals into instructional
 67 plans and practice;
- 68 (vi) delivering consistent and frequent job-embedded professional learning;
- 69 (vii) participating actively in professional learning experiences to deepen knowledge
 70 and skills for coaching;[~~and~~]
- 71 (viii) designing and facilitating relevant and cohesive professional learning sessions
 72 to strengthen the implementation of these evidence-based practices with
 73 educators; and
- 74 (ix) supporting the integration of social studies content into literacy instruction to
 75 enhance both reading comprehension and content knowledge, in alignment with
 76 the requirements of Section 53E-4-205.3;
- 77 (d) establish parameters for the relationship between a literacy coach and school or LEA,
 78 including ensuring that coaches do not engage in activities or duties unrelated to
 79 literacy coaching, including:
- 80 (i) serving as an evaluator, substitute teacher, clerical aid, recess or lunch aid,
 81 behavioral therapist, tester, guidance counselor, interventionist, program manager,
 82 or contest leader; or
- 83 (ii) any other assignment that frequently disrupts the coach's ability to support
 84 educators in improving instructional practice.
- 85 (3) The state board shall:
- 86 (a) ensure that one staff position supervises early literacy coaches statewide;
- 87 (b) select the pool of candidates for literacy coaching positions and coordinate with
 88 LEAs regarding interviews, final selection, and placement; and
- 89 (c) annually review coaching placements and adjust placements as necessary, based on
 90 the school's literacy achievement performance and the criteria established under
 91 Subsection (2).
- 92 (4) The state board shall provide professional learning support in early literacy by:
- 93 (a) facilitating professional learning opportunities to support literacy coaches statewide
 94 that includes knowledge and skill development in adult learning practices,
 95 job-embedded coaching, and family engagement;
- 96 (b) providing professional learning regional consultants to:
- 97 (i) support LEAs and regional education service agencies in designing, facilitating,
 98 monitoring, and adjusting professional learning in early literacy that aligns with

- 99 the professional learning standards described in Section 53G-11-303; and
 100 (ii) serve a cohort of LEAs within a geographic region of the state; and
 101 (c) providing statewide professional learning to support the use of collective efficacy,
 102 including the implementation of professional learning communities and school
 103 leadership teams through 2027.

104 Section 2. Section **53E-3-1004** is amended to read:

105 **53E-3-1004 . Community engagement for early literacy.**

106 (1) The state board shall:

- 107 (a) partner with a private business or nonprofit organization to annually provide
 108 personal, home-use, age-appropriate printed books or digital books with
 109 accompanying electronic reading devices to students:

110 (i) who attend:

111 (A) a school that participates in partnerships that receive grants under Title 53F,
 112 Chapter 5, Part 4, Partnerships for Student Success Grant Program; or

113 (B) a Title I school, as that term is defined in Section 53F-2-523; and

114 (ii) at a minimum, in kindergarten through grade 3; and

- 115 (b) provide students a choice of language where possible.

116 (2) The state board shall develop and promote a website that provides resources for teachers
 117 and other educational support personnel to:

118 (a) support targeted activities and strategies for parents to support at-home reading[-] ;

119 and

120 (b) integrate social studies content with literacy instruction, supporting both early
 121 literacy goals and social studies learning objectives described in Section 53E-4-205.3.

122 (3) The state board shall contract with one or more organizations that have expertise in
 123 coordinating community resources to:

- 124 (a) provide training and coaching to community, school, and parent engagement
 125 coordinators; and

126 (b) for a school that is not participating in a partnership that receives a grant under Title
 127 53F, Chapter 5, Part 4, Partnerships for Student Success Grant Program:

128 (i) assess the presence of existing community school infrastructure; and

129 (ii) provide necessary supports for parent, community, and business engagement,
 130 including services and coordination support.

131 Section 3. Section **53E-4-204** is amended to read:

132 **53E-4-204 . Standards and graduation requirements.**

- 133 (1) The state board shall establish rigorous core standards for Utah public schools and
 134 graduation requirements under Section 53E-3-501 for grades 9 through 12 that:
- 135 (a) are consistent with state law and federal regulations;
- 136 (b) use competency-based standards and assessments;
- 137 (c) include instruction that stresses general financial literacy from basic budgeting to
 138 financial investments, including bankruptcy education and a general financial literacy
 139 test-out option;
- 140 (d) include graduation requirements in language arts, mathematics, and science that
 141 exceed:
- 142 (i) 3.0 units in language arts including up to 0.5 units emphasizing verbal
 143 communication completed in a course or a school sponsored activity;
- 144 (ii) 2.0 units in mathematics; and
- 145 (iii) and 2.0 units in science;[-and]
- 146 [~~(e) include a graduation requirement in social studies that is equal to or exceeds 3.5~~
 147 ~~units, including at least 1.0 unit in American constitutional government and~~
 148 ~~citizenship as described in Section 53E-4-205.2;]~~
- 149 (e) include a graduation requirement in social studies that is equal to or exceeds 3.5
 150 units, including:
- 151 (i) at least 1.0 unit in American constitutional government and citizenship as
 152 described in Section 53E-4-205.2, consisting of two distinct semester courses that
 153 may not be duplicated to satisfy the requirement; and
- 154 (ii) at least 1.0 unit in United States history, consisting of two distinct semester
 155 courses that may not be duplicated to satisfy the requirement; and
- 156 (f) ensure up to 0.5 units of the 1.0 unit in American constitutional government and
 157 citizenship described in Subsection ~~[(+)(e)]~~ (1)(e)(i) may be earned by:
- 158 (i) completing a course or a school sponsored activity emphasizing verbal
 159 communication provided that a significant portion of the course or activity is
 160 dedicated to civic education, including:
- 161 (A) policy analysis;
- 162 (B) governmental systems; and
- 163 (C) civic engagement; or
- 164 (ii) participation in the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps described in 10 U.S.C.,
 165 Sec. 2031.
- 166 (2) The state board shall establish competency-based standards and assessments for elective

167 courses.

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

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

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

174 Section 4. Section **53E-4-205.3** is enacted to read:

175 **53E-4-205.3 . Elementary social studies education.**

176 (1) As used in this section:

177 (a) "Elementary grades" or "elementary grade level" means kindergarten through grade 6.

178 (b) "Integrated instruction" means teaching that purposefully connects social studies
179 content with other subject areas.

180 (c) "Social studies" means the integrated study of history, geography, civics, and
181 economics as outlined in the state board's standards for social studies.

182 (2) The board shall make rules in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah
183 Administrative Rulemaking Act, establishing standards to ensure that LEAs provide
184 daily social studies instruction in each elementary grade level.

185 (3) An LEA may provide a portion of the required social studies instruction through
186 integrated instruction that combines social studies content with:

187 (a) English language arts instruction, including:

188 (i) reading and analyzing primary sources, historical texts, and geographical materials;

189 (ii) writing activities that explore historical events, civic concepts, or cultural topics;

190 (iii) speaking and listening activities that develop civic discourse skills; and

191 (iv) research projects that investigate historical or contemporary issues; and

192 (b) mathematics instruction, including:

193 (i) analyzing data, census information, and economic indicators;

194 (ii) creating and interpreting timelines, graphs, and charts related to historical events;

195 (iii) calculating distances, scale, and area using maps and geographic tools;

196 (iv) exploring economic concepts through mathematical problem-solving; and

197 (v) using statistical reasoning to understand patterns relevant to social studies.

198 (4) The board shall:

199 (a) develop guidelines for integrating social studies instruction with English language
200 arts and mathematics;

- 201 (b) provide professional learning opportunities for elementary teachers in:
202 (i) social studies content knowledge;
203 (ii) effective social studies instructional strategies;
204 (iii) integration of social studies with English language arts and mathematics; and
205 (iv) use of primary sources and inquiry-based learning;
206 (c) develop and maintain a repository of social studies instructional materials and
207 resources;
208 (d) provide coaching and support to schools demonstrating need for improvement in
209 social studies instruction;
210 (e) establish criteria for qualifying integrated instruction;
211 (f) develop methods to measure student progress in social studies learning;
212 (g) establish benchmarks for social studies achievement at key grade levels;
213 (h) include social studies outcomes in school accountability measures; and
214 (i) report annually to the Legislature on:
215 (i) compliance with instructional time requirements;
216 (ii) implementation of integrated instruction;
217 (iii) student achievement in social studies; and
218 (iv) recommendations for improving elementary social studies education.
219 (5) An LEA shall:
220 (a) ensure that students in elementary grades receive the minimum daily social studies
221 instruction required in Subsection (2);
222 (b) adopt social studies curricula that meet state standards;
223 (c) ensure all elementary students have access to appropriate social studies materials;
224 (d) provide resources to support integrated instruction;
225 (e) ensure that elementary teachers receive ongoing professional development in social
226 studies instruction, including integrated instruction;
227 (f) provide time for collaborative planning to support integrated instruction;
228 (g) regularly assess student progress in social studies;
229 (h) use data to inform instruction and support; and
230 (i) report social studies instructional time and student outcomes to the state board as
231 required.
232 (6) An LEA shall implement all requirements of this section by the 2028-29 school year.
233 (7) Upon request, the board shall report to the Education Interim Committee on
234 implementation progress and initial outcomes.

235 Section 5. **Effective Date.**
236 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.