

Doug Welton proposes the following substitute bill:

School Curriculum Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Doug Welton

Senate Sponsor:

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LONG TITLE

General Description:

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

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- requires American constitutional government and citizenship to be taught as two distinct semester courses;
- requires United States history to be taught as two distinct semester courses;
- prohibits students from taking the same semester course twice to meet graduation requirements;
- requires literacy coaches to support the integration of social studies content into literacy instruction;
- requires regular social studies instruction for elementary grades;
- allows social studies instruction to be delivered through integrated instruction with English language arts and mathematics;
- requires implementation by July 1, 2031;
- repeals an adult education citizenship test;
- defines terms; and
- makes technical changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

This bill provides a special effective date.

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

29 **53E-3-1002**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 285

30 **53E-3-1004**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 285

31 **53E-4-204**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 142

32 ENACTS:

33 **53E-4-205.3**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

34 REPEALS:

35 **53E-4-205**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 142



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

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

39 **53E-3-1002 . Literacy coaching -- Professional learning.**

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

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

46 (a) establish criteria to determine which schools qualify for early literacy coaching,
47 prioritizing coaching among:

48 (i) schools that participate in partnerships that receive grants under Title 53F, Chapter
49 5, Part 4, Partnerships for Student Success Grant Program; and

50 (ii) schools that fall within the bottom 25% of all schools in literacy achievement
51 performance, as the state board further defines;

52 (b) establish minimum qualifications for early literacy coach positions to ensure
53 adequate preparation with necessary expertise;

54 (c) define roles and responsibilities for a literacy coach, including:

55 (i) assisting educators in analyzing data to inform instructional adjustments;

56 (ii) engaging in instructional coaching cycles with educators to build capacity for
57 improved classroom instructional practices;

58 (iii) using principles of adult learning to effectively partner with educators to
59 integrate professional learning into classroom practice;

60 (iv) leveraging knowledge of the science of reading and evidence-based practices to
61 support educators in maximizing student learning;

62 (v) partnering with a school's leader to support school-wide literacy goals to provide

- 63 a team of support for educators to embed the state-wide goals into instructional
64 plans and practice;
- 65 (vi) delivering consistent and frequent job-embedded professional learning;
- 66 (vii) participating actively in professional learning experiences to deepen knowledge
67 and skills for coaching;[~~and~~]
- 68 (viii) designing and facilitating relevant and cohesive professional learning sessions
69 to strengthen the implementation of these evidence-based practices with
70 educators; and
- 71 (ix) supporting the integration of social studies content into literacy instruction to
72 enhance both reading comprehension and content knowledge, in alignment with
73 the requirements of Section 53E-4-205.3;
- 74 (d) establish parameters for the relationship between a literacy coach and school or LEA,
75 including ensuring that coaches do not engage in activities or duties unrelated to
76 literacy coaching, including:
- 77 (i) serving as an evaluator, substitute teacher, clerical aid, recess or lunch aid,
78 behavioral therapist, tester, guidance counselor, interventionist, program manager,
79 or contest leader; or
- 80 (ii) any other assignment that frequently disrupts the coach's ability to support
81 educators in improving instructional practice.
- 82 (3) The state board shall:
- 83 (a) ensure that one staff position supervises early literacy coaches statewide;
- 84 (b) select the pool of candidates for literacy coaching positions and coordinate with
85 LEAs regarding interviews, final selection, and placement; and
- 86 (c) annually review coaching placements and adjust placements as necessary, based on
87 the school's literacy achievement performance and the criteria established under
88 Subsection (2).
- 89 (4) The state board shall provide professional learning support in early literacy by:
- 90 (a) facilitating professional learning opportunities to support literacy coaches statewide
91 that includes knowledge and skill development in adult learning practices,
92 job-embedded coaching, and family engagement;
- 93 (b) providing professional learning regional consultants to:
- 94 (i) support LEAs and regional education service agencies in designing, facilitating,
95 monitoring, and adjusting professional learning in early literacy that aligns with
96 the professional learning standards described in Section 53G-11-303; and

- 97 (ii) serve a cohort of LEAs within a geographic region of the state; and
 98 (c) providing statewide professional learning to support the use of collective efficacy,
 99 including the implementation of professional learning communities and school
 100 leadership teams through 2027.

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

102 **53E-3-1004 . Community engagement for early literacy.**

103 (1) The state board shall:

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

107 (i) who attend:

- 108 (A) a school that participates in partnerships that receive grants under Title 53F,
 109 Chapter 5, Part 4, Partnerships for Student Success Grant Program; or
 110 (B) a Title I school, as that term is defined in Section 53F-2-523; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

121 (a) provide training and coaching to community, school, and parent engagement
 122 coordinators; and

123 (b) for a school that is not participating in a partnership that receives a grant under Title
 124 53F, Chapter 5, Part 4, Partnerships for Student Success Grant Program:

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

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

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

129 **53E-4-204 . Standards and graduation requirements.**

130 (1) The state board shall establish rigorous core standards for Utah public schools and

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

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

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

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

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

172 **53E-4-205.3 . Elementary social studies education.**

173 (1) As used in this section:

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

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

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

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

182 (3) The board shall:

183 (a) develop guidelines for integrating, where appropriate, social studies instruction with
184 English language arts and mathematics;

185 (b) develop and maintain a repository of social studies instructional materials and
186 resources;

187 (c) establish criteria for qualifying integrated instruction; and

188 (d) develop methods to measure student progress in social studies learning.

189 (4) An LEA shall:

190 (a) ensure that students in elementary grades receive regular social studies instruction
191 required in Subsection (2);

192 (b) in accordance with Section 53G-10-304, adopt social studies curricula that meet state
193 standards;

194 (c) ensure all elementary students have access to appropriate social studies materials;

195 (d) provide resources to support integrated instruction;

196 (e) ensure that elementary teachers receive ongoing professional development in social
197 studies instruction, including integrated instruction;

198 (f) provide time for collaborative planning to support integrated instruction;

- 199 (g) regularly assess student progress in social studies;
- 200 (h) use data to inform instruction and support; and
- 201 (i) report social studies instructional time and student outcomes to the state board as
- 202 required.

203 (5) An LEA shall implement all requirements of this section by July 1, 2031.

204 (6) Upon request, the board shall report to the Education Interim Committee on
205 implementation progress and initial outcomes.

206 Section 5. **Repealer.**

207 This bill repeals:

208 Section **53E-4-205, American civics education initiative for adult education.**

209 Section 6. **Effective Date.**

210 This bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.