

Joint Resolution Regarding School Activities and Practices

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Doug Welton

Senate Sponsor:

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This resolution encourages Utah public schools to support student well-being through increased physical activity and balanced use of technology.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- encourages more time for physical activity and play;
- recommends thoughtful limits on screen use in schools; and
- supports efforts to improve student mental health.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

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

WHEREAS, over the past decade, rates of anxiety, depression, and self-harm among children and adolescents have risen sharply;

WHEREAS, research links the deterioration in mental health among youth to the decline of free play, face-to-face interaction, and outdoor activity;

WHEREAS, children today spend significantly more time using screens, including both personal and school issued devices, than any previous generation;

WHEREAS, physical activity, unstructured outdoor play, and real-world social interaction build resilience, confidence, and mental health in children;

WHEREAS, the expansion of digital learning tools has produced both benefits and unintended harms, including distraction, overreliance on virtual instruction, and decreased engagement;

WHEREAS, constant screen exposure in school settings can displace essential childhood experiences such as tactile learning, group collaboration, and time spent in nature; and

31 WHEREAS, schools serve a vital role in shaping childhood culture and development;

32 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah
33 encourages public schools to increase the amount of time dedicated to physical education,
34 outdoor recess, and unstructured free play, recognizing their essential role in healthy childhood
35 development.

36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature recommends schools reduce excessive
37 reliance on screens and digital platforms during the school day, particularly for younger
38 students, and restore balanced use of textbooks, printed materials, and hands-on learning.

39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature urges school leaders, parents, and
40 policymakers to work together to promote environments rooted in movement and real-world
41 connection and monitor the impact of school practices on student mental health.

42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be prepared and submitted to
43 the State Board of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Utah Parent
44 Teacher Association, and each local education agency in the state.