

John D. Johnson proposes the following substitute bill:

Public Education Revisions

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: John D. Johnson

House Sponsor: R. Neil Walter

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill amends provisions and programs regarding the operation of the public education system.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- defines terms, including "general control and supervision" of the public education system;
- corrects references regarding the State Superintendent's Annual Report;
- allows the State Board of Education (state board) to authorize the state superintendent of public instruction to appoint and supervise the superintendent of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (USDB);
- renames the Catalyst Center Grant Program to the Applied Educational Experience Grant Program and amends associated provisions regarding eligibility for and use of program funds;
- aligns terminology regarding juvenile justice reintegration to apply to all local education agencies rather than only school districts;
- amends provisions to allow the USDB to coordinate with the state security chief rather than the county security chief of the county for each USDB campus;
- allows the state board to reduce suicide prevention grant amounts in certain circumstances; and
- makes technical and conforming changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

53E-1-102, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 343

53E-1-203, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapters 298, 327

53E-8-204, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 509

53E-10-310, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, First Special Session, Chapter 9

53F-9-204, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapters 413, 433

53G-8-213, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 348

53G-8-701.5, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 388

53G-8-701.6, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapters 388, 470

53G-8-701.8, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, First Special Session, Chapter 11

53G-9-702, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapters 98, 328

RENUMBERS AND AMENDS:

53F-5-224, (Renumbered from 53E-3-507.1, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, First Special Session, Chapter 9)

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

Section 1. Section **53E-1-102** is amended to read:

53E-1-102 . Public education code definitions.

Unless otherwise indicated, as used in this title, Title 53F, Public Education System -- Funding, and Title 53G, Public Education System -- Local Administration:

(1) "Bullying" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53G-9-601.

(2) "Charter agreement" means an agreement made in accordance with Section 53G-5-303 that authorizes the operation of a charter school.

(3) "Charter school governing board" means the board that governs a charter school.

(4) "District school" means a public school under the control of a local school board.

(5) "General control and supervision" means, including as used in Utah Constitution, Article X, Section 3, that the state board shall direct and manage all aspects of the public education system in accordance with laws the Legislature makes, including in relation to compliance and monitoring of an LEA under Section 53E-3-401.

~~[(5)]~~ (6) "Individualized education program" or "IEP" means a written statement for a student with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1400 et seq.

~~[(6)]~~ (7) "LEA governing board" means:

(a) for a school district, the local school board;

(b) for a charter school, the charter school governing board; or

(c) for the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, the state board.

~~[(7)]~~ (8) "Local education agency" or "LEA" means:

(a) a school district;

(b) a charter school; or

(c) the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.

~~[(8)]~~ (9) "Local school board" means a board elected under Title 20A, Chapter 14, Part 2, Election of Members of Local Boards of Education.

~~[(9)]~~ (10) "Minimum School Program" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53F-2-102.

~~[(10)]~~ (11) "Parent" means a parent or legal guardian.

~~[(11)]~~ (12) "Public education code" means:

(a) this title;

(b) Title 53F, Public Education System -- Funding; and

(c) Title 53G, Public Education System -- Local Administration.

~~[(12)]~~ (13) "Section 504 accommodation plan" means a plan developed in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. Sec. 701 et seq., for a student with a disability, to meet the student's educational needs and ensure equitable access to a free appropriate public education.

~~[(13)]~~ (14) "School nurse" means a registered nurse:

(a) who holds:

(i) a license under Title 58, Chapter 31b, Nurse Practice Act; or

(ii) a multistate license as that term is defined in Section 58-31e-102; and

(b) whose primary role is the care of a defined group of students enrolled in the public school system.

~~[(14)]~~ (15) "State board" means the State Board of Education.

~~[(15)]~~ (16) "State superintendent" means the state superintendent of public instruction appointed under Section 53E-3-301.

Section 2. Section **53E-1-203** is amended to read:

53E-1-203 . State Superintendent's Annual Report.

(1) The state board shall prepare and submit to the governor, the Education Interim Committee, and the Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee, by January 15 of each year, an annual written report known as the State Superintendent's Annual Report that includes:

- 97 (a) the operations, activities, programs, and services of the state board;
98 (b) subject to Subsection (4)(b), all reports listed in Subsection (4)(a); and
99 (c) data on the general condition of the schools with recommendations considered
100 desirable for specific programs, including:
101 (i) a complete statement of fund balances;
102 (ii) a complete statement of revenues by fund and source;
103 (iii) a complete statement of adjusted expenditures by fund, the status of bonded
104 indebtedness, the cost of new school plants, and school levies;
105 (iv) a complete statement of state funds allocated to each school district and charter
106 school by source, including supplemental appropriations, and a complete
107 statement of expenditures by each school district and charter school, including
108 supplemental appropriations, by function and object as outlined in the United
109 States Department of Education publication "Financial Accounting for Local and
110 State School Systems";
111 (v) a statement that includes data on:
112 (A) fall enrollments;
113 (B) average membership;
114 (C) high school graduates;
115 (D) all employees, including data reported by school districts on educator ratings
116 described in Section 53G-11-511;
117 (E) pupil-teacher ratios;
118 (F) average class sizes;
119 (G) average salaries;
120 (H) applicable private school data; and
121 (I) data from statewide assessments described in Section 53E-4-301 for each
122 school and school district;
123 (vi) statistical information for each school district and charter school regarding:
124 (A) student attendance by grade level;
125 (B) the percentage of students chronically absent;
126 (C) the percentage of student excused absences; and
127 (D) the percentage of student unexcused absences;
128 (vii) statistical information regarding incidents of delinquent activity in the schools,
129 at school-related activities, on school buses, and at school bus stops; and
130 (viii) other statistical and financial information about the school system that the state

- 131 superintendent considers pertinent.
- 132 (2)(a) For the purposes of Subsection (1)(c)(v):
- 133 (i) the pupil-teacher ratio for a school shall be calculated by dividing the number of
- 134 students enrolled in a school by the number of full-time equivalent teachers
- 135 assigned to the school, including regular classroom teachers, school-based
- 136 specialists, and special education teachers;
- 137 (ii) the pupil-teacher ratio for a school district shall be the median pupil-teacher ratio
- 138 of the schools within a school district;
- 139 (iii) the pupil-teacher ratio for charter schools aggregated shall be the median
- 140 pupil-teacher ratio of charter schools in the state; and
- 141 (iv) the pupil-teacher ratio for the state's public schools aggregated shall be the
- 142 median pupil-teacher ratio of public schools in the state.
- 143 (b) The report shall:
- 144 (i) include the pupil-teacher ratio for:
- 145 (A) each school district;
- 146 (B) the charter schools aggregated; and
- 147 (C) the state's public schools aggregated; and
- 148 (ii) identify a website where pupil-teacher ratios for each school in the state may be
- 149 accessed.
- 150 (3) For each operation, activity, program, or service provided by the state board, the annual
- 151 report shall include:
- 152 (a) a description of the operation, activity, program, or service;
- 153 (b) data and metrics:
- 154 (i) selected and used by the state board to measure progress, performance,
- 155 effectiveness, and scope of the operation, activity, program, or service, including
- 156 summary data; and
- 157 (ii) that are consistent and comparable for each state operation, activity, program, or
- 158 service;
- 159 (c) budget data, including the amount and source of funding, expenses, and allocation of
- 160 full-time employees for the operation, activity, program, or service;
- 161 (d) historical data from previous years for comparison with data reported under
- 162 Subsections (3)(b) and (c);
- 163 (e) goals, challenges, and achievements related to the operation, activity, program, or
- 164 service;

- (f) relevant federal and state statutory references and requirements;
- (g) contact information of officials knowledgeable and responsible for each operation, activity, program, or service; and
- (h) other information determined by the state board that:
 - (i) may be needed, useful, or of historical significance; or
 - (ii) promotes accountability and transparency for each operation, activity, program, or service with the public and elected officials.

(4)(a) Except as provided in Subsection (4)(b), the annual report shall also include:

- (i) the report described in Section 53E-3-507 by the state board on career and technical education needs and program access;
- (ii) the report described in Section 53E-3-515 by the state board on the Hospitality and Tourism Management Career and Technical Education Pilot Program;
- (iii) the report described in Section 53E-3-516 by the state board on certain incidents that occur on school grounds;
- (iv) the report described in Section 53E-4-202 by the state board on the development and implementation of the core standards for Utah public schools;
- (v) the report described in Section 53E-5-310 by the state board on school ~~turnaround~~ improvement and leadership development;
- (vi) the report described in Section 53E-10-308 by the state board and Utah Board of Higher Education on student participation in the concurrent enrollment program;
- (vii) the report described in Section 53F-5-506 by the state board on information related to personalized, competency-based learning;
- (viii) the report described in Section ~~53G-8-203~~ 53G-8-301 by the state board on LEAs' policies and procedures related to physical restraint and interventions; and
- (ix) the report described in Section 53G-9-802 by the state board on dropout prevention and recovery services.

(b) The Education Interim Committee or the Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee may request a report described in Subsection (4)(a) to be reported separately from the State Superintendent's Annual Report.

(5) The annual report shall be designed to provide clear, accurate, and accessible information to the public, the governor, and the Legislature.

(6) The state board shall:

- (a) submit the annual report in accordance with Section 68-3-14; and
- (b) make the annual report, and previous annual reports, accessible to the public by

placing a link to the reports on the state board's website.

(7)(a) Upon request of the Education Interim Committee or Public Education

Appropriations Subcommittee, the state board shall present the State Superintendent's Annual Report to either committee.

(b) After submitting the State Superintendent's Annual Report in accordance with this section, the state board may supplement the report at a later time with updated data, information, or other materials as necessary or upon request by the governor, the Education Interim Committee, or the Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee.

Section 3. Section **53E-8-204** is amended to read:

53E-8-204 . Authority of the state board -- Rulemaking -- Superintendent -- Advisory council.

(1)(a) The state board is the governing board of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.

(b) The state board shall, as the state board determines necessary, establish committees, policies, or processes necessary to the function and oversight of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.

(2)(a) The state board shall[-] :

(i) appoint a superintendent for the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind[-] ; or

(ii) authorize the state superintendent of public instruction to appoint and supervise a superintendent for the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, under the approval of the state board.

(b) The state board shall make rules in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, regarding the qualifications, terms of employment, and duties of the superintendent for the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.

(3) The superintendent shall:

(a) subject to the approval of the state board, appoint an associate superintendent to administer the Utah School for the Deaf based on:

(i) demonstrated competency as an expert educator of deaf persons; and

(ii) knowledge of school management and the instruction of deaf persons; and

(b) subject to the approval of the state board, appoint an associate superintendent to administer the Utah School for the Blind based on:

(i) demonstrated competency as an expert educator of blind persons; and

(ii) knowledge of school management and the instruction of blind persons, including an understanding of the unique needs and education of deafblind persons.

- (4) The state board shall:
- (a) approve the annual budget and expenditures of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind; and
 - (b) administer the financial operations of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.
- (5)(a) The state board shall submit a report in accordance with Section 53E-1-201 on the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.
- (b) The state board shall ensure that the report described in Subsection (5)(a) includes:
- (i) a financial report;
 - (ii) a report on Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind programs and activities; and
 - (iii) a report of student academic performance.

Section 4. Section **53E-10-310** is amended to read:

53E-10-310 . Utah first credential program.

- (1) As used in this section:
- (a) "Eligible institution" means an institution of higher education as defined in Section 53H-1-101.
 - (b) "First credential" means a certificate awarded by the state board to an eligible student who meets the criteria described in Subsection (7).
 - (c)(i) "Industry-recognized credential" means a credential that is:
 - (A) developed and offered by, or endorsed by, a nationally recognized industry association or organization representing a sizable portion of the industry sector;
 - (B) sought or accepted by employers within the industry or sector as a recognized, preferred, or required credential for recruitment, screening, hiring, retention, or advancement purposes; and
 - (C) regularly reviewed, updated, and validated by the issuing body to ensure ongoing alignment with industry standards and labor market needs.
 - (ii) "Industry-recognized credential" may also include a credential offered through a catalyst center as described in Section ~~[53E-3-507.1]~~ 53F-5-224.
 - (d) "Master credential list" means the list of approved industry-recognized credentials maintained by the state board in accordance with this section.
 - (e) "Program" means the first credential program described in this section.
 - (f) "Technical college" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53H-1-101.
- (2) The commissioner of higher education, the state superintendent of public instruction, and the governor's education advisor shall establish the First Credential Oversight Committee comprised of:

- (a) representatives from industries, including:
- (i) members of professional associations or trade groups; and
 - (ii) employers from high-demand sectors as the state board determines in collaboration with the Utah Board of Higher Education and the Department of Workforce Services;
- (b) representatives from education including:
- (i) members from the state board;
 - (ii) the director of the Catalyst Center Grant Program described in Section [53E-3-507.1] 53F-5-224;
 - (iii) LEA administrators, such as a superintendent or charter school director;
 - (iv) professionals from institutions of higher education, including technical colleges;
 - (v) career and technical education specialists; and
 - (vi) Talent Ready Utah; and
- (c) workforce development experts, including representatives from the Department of Workforce Services.
- (3) The state board shall staff the First Credential Oversight Committee.
- (4) The First Credential Oversight Committee shall develop a first credential master plan, which shall include:
- (a) a framework for developing and maintaining the master credential list;
 - (b) a comprehensive needs assessment framework that evaluates:
 - (i) resources available through institutions of higher education, including:
 - (A) faculty expertise and availability;
 - (B) facilities and equipment;
 - (C) existing certification programs; and
 - (D) potential for program expansion;
 - (ii) industry partnership opportunities, including:
 - (A) geographical proximity to potential partners;
 - (B) willingness of local industries to participate;
 - (C) capacity for work-based learning placements; and
 - (D) alignment between industry needs and educational capabilities; and
 - (iii) general resource availability, including:
 - (A) current funding streams and potential funding sources;
 - (B) existing technology infrastructure;
 - (C) qualified personnel and staffing needs; and

- (D) professional development requirements;
- (c) credential approval processes;
- (d) methods for ensuring industry demand alignment;
- (e) wage considerations for occupations associated with approved credentials;
- (f) clear definitions of industry-recognized credentials;
- (g) strategies for promoting stackability and sequencing of credentials;
- (h) approaches to ensure regional relevance of credentials;
- (i) mechanisms for collaboration between educational institutions, industry partners, and workforce development agencies;
- (j) strategies for continuous evaluation and improvement of the program;
- (k) the creation of a credentials review committee, including membership and duties;
- (l) in accordance with Subsection (17), an established framework of planning, implementation, and student outcome performance funding for an LEA administering first credential programming;
- (m) a weighted system for the master credential list that:
- (i) assigns higher values to credentials based on:
- (A) alignment with high-demand, high-wage occupations;
- (B) incorporation of multiple learning pathways, including coursework, apprenticeships, internships, work-based learning, and related service opportunities;
- (C) industry recognition and portability; and
- (D) stackability with other credentials or degrees; and
- (ii) uses the weighted values to:
- (A) determine incentive funding levels;
- (B) prioritize program expansion support; and
- (C) guide student career planning; and
- (n) guidelines for LEAs to procure industry-recognized certification program licenses, including:
- (i) verification that certifications appear on the master credential list;
- (ii) requirement for competency-based assessments in proctored environments;
- (iii) documentation of local industry endorsement; and
- (iv) alignment with state and federal computer science initiatives where applicable, including the Computer Science for Utah Grant Program described in Section 53H-13-306.

- (5) In accordance with the Utah First Credential Master Plan, the state board shall:
- (a) ensure that the credentials review committee membership reflects a balance of perspectives and expertise;
 - (b) develop an online application and submission system for credentialing organizations and providers to submit programs for inclusion in the master credential list;
 - (c) establish and maintain the master credential list based on the recommendations of the credentials review committee;
 - (d) develop clear mechanisms for students to understand how earning one credential can lead to higher-level certifications or degrees; and
 - (e) foster partnerships between high schools, technical colleges, employers, and apprenticeship programs to ensure students have access to meaningful work-based learning opportunities.
- (6) The state board shall:
- (a) automatically include on the initial master credential list any existing credential that:
 - (i) meets the definition of industry-recognized credential under this section; and
 - (ii) is currently recognized by the state board or Utah Board of Higher Education as of July 1, 2024; and
 - (b) review all automatically included credentials within one year to ensure ongoing compliance with program requirements.
- (7) The state board shall award a first credential certificate to an eligible student who completes one of the following:
- (a) concurrent enrollment courses, composed of:
 - (i) between 12 and 18 core general education credits, or as industry standards dictate, with courses from different general education categories; or
 - (ii) a prescribed set of courses as the Utah Board of Higher Education designates;
 - (b) an industry-recognized credential included on the master credential list;
 - (c) 300 hours of completion through a youth apprenticeship program that:
 - (i) is described in Sections 35A-6-102 and 35A-6-104.5; and
 - (ii) includes courses that fulfill the requirements for an industry-recognized credential included on the master credential list;
 - (d) completion of a technical college certificate; or
 - (e) completion of a Career and Technical Education Pathway program.
- (8) The Utah Board of Higher Education shall ensure that credits earned for a first credential certificate are:

- 369 (a) accepted and transferable to institutions of higher education, including technical
370 colleges;
- 371 (b) applicable towards relevant degree programs; and
- 372 (c) recognized by relevant industries as adequate preparation for employment.
- 373 (9) Subject to legislative appropriations, the Utah Board of Higher Education shall award a
374 first credential scholarship to each student who earns a first credential certificate.
- 375 (10) The first credential scholarship may be used at the following institutions:
- 376 (a) an institution of higher education as defined in Section 53H-1-101; or
- 377 (b) a private, nonprofit college or university in the state that is accredited by the
378 Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.
- 379 (11) The Utah Board of Higher Education shall annually determine the first credential
380 scholarship amount based on:
- 381 (a) the number of eligible students; and
- 382 (b) appropriations made by the Legislature.
- 383 (12) A student may use the first credential scholarship for:
- 384 (a) tuition and fees;
- 385 (b) books and supplies; or
- 386 (c) other educational expenses as the Utah Board of Higher Education determines.
- 387 (13) The Utah Board of Higher Education shall ensure the scholarship is valid for use
388 within three years from the date the student graduates from high school.
- 389 (14) A student may earn the first credential scholarship in addition to any other
390 state-sponsored scholarships for which the student may be eligible.
- 391 (15) The first credential oversight committee shall present the master plan described in
392 Subsection (4) to the Education Interim Committee by the November 2025 interim
393 committee meeting.
- 394 (16) Every three years, the First Credential Oversight Committee shall:
- 395 (a) review the Utah First Credential Master Plan;
- 396 (b) as needed, create a list of recommendations and update the Utah First Credential
397 Master Plan;
- 398 (c) report the list of recommendations and the updated Utah First Credential Master Plan
399 to:
- 400 (i) the state board;
- 401 (ii) the Utah Board of Higher Education;
- 402 (iii) the Department of Workforce Services;

- 403 (iv) the Education Interim Committee; and
- 404 (v) the Economic Development and Workforce Services Interim Committee.
- 405 (17)(a) The state board shall administer a first credential grant program for an LEA and
- 406 award a grant in accordance with the following process.
- 407 (b) The First Credential Oversight Committee shall establish:
- 408 (i) a needs assessment tool that evaluates:
- 409 (A) an LEA's current first credential offering;
- 410 (B) an LEA's capacity to develop or expand a first credential pathway;
- 411 (C) resources and support needed for a first credential program, including
- 412 resources available through institutions of higher education, industry
- 413 partnership opportunities, and general resource availability; and
- 414 (D) each potential barrier to implementation; and
- 415 (ii) a continuum of need to place each applying LEA.
- 416 (c) An LEA seeking a first credential grant shall submit to the First Credential Oversight
- 417 Committee:
- 418 (i) a completed needs assessment; and
- 419 (ii) a grant application that contains:
- 420 (A) current first credential data, including current credentials offered;
- 421 (B) preliminary goals for creating or expanding first credential opportunities
- 422 within the LEA; and
- 423 (C) if applicable, plans for procurement of industry certification program licenses,
- 424 including certification details and alignment with master credential list,
- 425 documentation of employer endorsements, assessment and proctoring
- 426 procedures, and integration with existing computer science programs.
- 427 (d) The First Credential Oversight Committee shall:
- 428 (i) review each submitted application and needs assessment;
- 429 (ii) assign the LEA a placement on the continuum of need; and
- 430 (iii) provide to the LEA a specific requirement for an implementation plan based on:
- 431 (A) the LEA's continuum placement;
- 432 (B) each identified area for growth;
- 433 (C) each available resource; and
- 434 (D) each additional factor the First Credential Oversight Committee determines
- 435 relevant.
- 436 (e) An LEA shall submit to the First Credential Oversight Committee an implementation

plan that includes:

- (i) specific goals for expanding a first credential opportunity;
- (ii) each implementation step and timeline;
- (iii) a detailed cost projection; and
- (iv) each additional element the committee requires based on the needs assessment results.

(f) The First Credential Oversight Committee shall:

- (i) review the implementation plan;
- (ii) direct technical assistance to the LEA in accordance with the LEA's implementation plan;
- (iii) provide feedback to the LEA to improve the implementation plan;
- (iv) approve each implementation plan that meets the established criteria; and
- (v) award an implementation grant for each approved plan.

(g) Subject to legislative appropriations, the state board shall:

- (i) award an incentive grant to an LEA that:
 - (A) has implemented an approved plan;
 - (B) increases the number of students who earn a first credential certificate; and
 - (C) achieves each established implementation goal; and
- (ii) in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, and in collaboration with the First Credential Oversight Committee, establish by rule:
 - (A) tiers for incentive grant awards;
 - (B) performance metrics for continued funding;
 - (C) reporting requirements for a grant recipient;
 - (D) requirements for reporting certification program outcomes and industry alignment;
 - (E) procedures for coordinating with computer science initiative grants; and
 - (F) guidelines for certification program procurement and implementation.

(18) In accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, and in collaboration with the Utah Board of Higher Education and the Department of Workforce Services, the state board shall make rules to implement the provisions of this section.

Section 5. Section **53F-5-224**, which is renumbered from Section 53E-3-507.1 is renumbered and amended to read:

[53E-3-507.1] 53F-5-224 . Applied Professional Education Experience Grant

Program.

(1) As used in this section:

- (a) "Advisory board" means a group of individuals, which may include industry, postsecondary, and community representatives, that reviews program direction and ensures alignment with workforce needs.
- ~~[(a)]~~ (b) "[Catalyst] Applied professional education experience center" or "APEX center" means a program or facility operated by an LEA that:
- (i) provides learning experiences and instruction that replicate professional environments and workplace practices, including experiences obtained through the Utah First Credential program described in Section 53E-10-310;
 - (ii) provides profession-based learning experiences by partnering with local industry, business, and community organizations to develop and implement student projects that address specific needs or objectives identified by those partners;
 - (iii) aligns programs with high-skill, high-demand career pathways and postsecondary education opportunities;
 - (iv) incorporates industry-standard tools, technologies, and methods into instruction and student work;
 - (v) prioritizes student activities and profession-based learning projects to build durable professional skills aligned with industry standards and needs;
 - (vi) facilitates mentorship and participation by industry professionals to guide a student and evaluate the student's work;
 - (vii) includes an advisory board~~[composed of industry, postsecondary, and community representatives to review program direction and ensure alignment with workforce needs]~~; and
 - (viii) establishes programs or activities that address gaps in training or resources within the local or regional workforce.
- (c) "Consortium" means two or more LEAs located within the same career and technical education geographic planning region.
- ~~[(b)]~~ (d) "Director" means the employee described in Subsection (3).
- ~~[(e)]~~ (e) "LEA" means:
- (i) a school district;
 - (ii) charter school; or
 - (iii) the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.

505 ~~[(d)]~~ (f) "Program" means the ~~[Catalyst Center]~~ Applied Professional Education
506 Experience Grant Program created in this section.

507 (g) "Unwarranted duplication" means the overlap of resources that lead to inefficiencies,
508 wasted resources, or a lack of coordination in providing comprehensive career and
509 technical education programs.

510 (2) Subject to legislative appropriation as described in Section 53F-9-204, the state board
511 shall establish the ~~[Catalyst Center]~~ Applied Professional Education Experience Grant
512 Program to provide funding to an LEA to create or expand an existing ~~[catalyst]~~ APEX
513 center.

514 (3) The state board shall hire a director to oversee the program who:

515 (a) has demonstrated abilities in:

516 (i) developing and implementing innovative initiatives that transform traditional
517 education delivery models;

518 (ii) establishing public-private partnership frameworks that create student pathways
519 into high-growth industries; and

520 (iii) scaling programs that integrate real-world experiences directly into educational
521 environments;

522 (b) possesses expertise in:

523 (i) managing complex multi-stakeholder initiatives across education, industry, and
524 government sectors;

525 (ii) implementing data-driven organizational change strategies; and

526 (iii) developing sustainable funding models for innovative education programs;

527 (c) maintains active leadership roles in:

528 (i) state or national workforce innovation organizations;

529 (ii) industry associations focused on talent development; and

530 (iii) public-private collaboratives addressing workforce transformation;

531 (d) reports directly to the state superintendent or a deputy superintendent to ensure
532 appropriate program oversight and cross-departmental coordination while
533 maintaining distinct program objectives and outcomes;

534 (e) establishes formal collaboration mechanisms with the state board's career and
535 technical education director to align ~~[catalyst]~~ APEX center initiatives with existing
536 career and technical education programs; and

537 (f) facilitates training and a collaborative network of experienced ~~[catalyst]~~ APEX center
538 administrators and instructors across all participating LEAs.

- (4) The director:
- (a) shall:
 - (i) administer the program;
 - (ii) collaborate with the director of career and technical education to align the program with the career and technical education standards described in Section [53E-3-507] 53F-5-224;
 - (iii) create a web-based application system to streamline submissions and allow for linked supporting documentation;
 - (iv) ensure that grant funds are used in accordance with this section; and
 - (v) allow grant funds to be used for planning, including:
 - (A) feasibility studies;
 - (B) stakeholder engagement;
 - (C) labor market analysis;
 - (D) initial program design and rollout; and
 - (E) teacher and staff training specific to the delivery of profession-based learning; and
 - (b) may collaborate with the Utah System of Higher Education and the First Credential Oversight Committee established in Section 53E-10-310.
- (5) An LEA applying for a grant shall demonstrate capacity for workforce alignment programs within the LEA or provide a plan to establish or enhance alignment by:
- (a) describing current or planned efforts to align programming with labor market needs and local industry demands;
 - (b) outlining steps to establish or enhance partnerships with:
 - (i) local industries and employers to ensure workforce relevance; or
 - (ii) technical colleges, degree-granting institutions, or other postsecondary entities to support postsecondary transitions for students;
 - (c) identifying proposed programming goals and how the goals address gaps in regional workforce training or opportunities; and
 - (d) as the LEA determines relevant, planning to incorporate:
 - (i) career and technical student organizations;
 - (ii) advisory boards with representation from local industries and workforce experts;
 - (iii) professional learning opportunities for instructors to improve workforce-focused skills; and
 - (iv) strategies for using labor market data to refine and improve program offerings.

- (6)(a) An LEA may apply for a grant by submitting an application to the state board.
- (b) The application shall include:
- (i) a plan to:
 - (A) create or expand one or more ~~[catalyst]~~ APEX centers; or
 - (B) create or expand current career and technical education offerings within the LEA to bring the LEA's career and technical education offerings in alignment with the definition of ~~[a-catalyst]~~ an APEX center in Subsection (1);
 - (ii) a detailed multi-year budget, identifying proposed expenditures for each year of the grant;
 - (iii) justification for any capital expenditures, including plans for building use;
 - (iv) a description of how the grant will be used to improve student outcomes, including:
 - (A) increased access to career pathway offerings;
 - (B) measurable improvements in career readiness, including certifications, credentials, or apprenticeships;
 - (C) increased offerings that advance students' progression toward postsecondary education or advanced training; and
 - (D) plans for enhanced student engagement through real-world, profession-based learning;
 - (v) evidence of any existing partnerships with industry, including letters of collaboration;
 - (vi) evidence of alignment with the LEA's strategic plan and local labor market needs;
 - (vii) an explanation of how awarded funds will be used without unnecessary carryforward;
 - (viii) a description of well-defined metrics the LEA will use to establish and measure student proficiency;
 - ~~[(viii)]~~ (ix) as applicable, a description of how the ~~[catalyst]~~ APEX center programming will align with or enhance programs funded by the weighted pupil unit add-on described in Section 53F-2-311;
 - ~~[(ix)]~~ (x) for applications submitted by a consortium of LEAs, a description of how:
 - (A) the ~~[catalyst]~~ APEX center will serve students across the consortium;
 - (B) costs and resources will be shared; and
 - (C) economies of scale will be achieved; and
 - ~~[(x)]~~ (xi) a description of any proposed planning activities, including expected

- 607 timelines and outcomes.
- 608 (7)(a) The director shall:
- 609 [~~(a)~~] (i) prioritize an LEA that:
- 610 [~~(i)~~] (A) proposes innovative programming supported by local labor market data;
- 611 [~~(ii)~~] (B) collaborates with local postsecondary institutions and industry;
- 612 [~~(iii)~~] (C) demonstrates the ability to sustain the [~~catalyst~~] APEX center after the
- 613 grant period;
- 614 [~~(iv)~~] (D) demonstrates a strong focus on student outcomes and workforce
- 615 alignment;
- 616 [~~(v)~~] (E) addresses gaps in high-demand, high-skill career pathways;
- 617 [~~(vi)~~] (F) ensures funds are used to enhance programming quality before
- 618 expansion; and
- 619 [~~(vii)~~] (G) provides for a large number of students to participate in [~~catalyst~~] APEX
- 620 center programs without limiting participation to students based on
- 621 socio-economic challenges;
- 622 [~~(b)~~] (ii) allow an LEA to apply for:
- 623 [~~(i)~~] (A) smaller grants to bring existing career and technical education programs
- 624 to high-quality standards the state board establishes;
- 625 [~~(ii)~~] (B) larger multi-year grants for capital expenditures and program expansion;
- 626 and
- 627 [~~(iii)~~] (C) ensure that grant funding does not duplicate existing resources provided
- 628 by other state or local entities;
- 629 [~~(c)~~] (iii) consider the unique challenges and opportunities faced by rural LEAs in
- 630 developing and sustaining a career and technical education program or [~~catalyst~~]
- 631 APEX center, including:
- 632 [~~(i)~~] (A) encouraging collaborative applications from rural consortia or regional
- 633 education service agencies described in Section 53G-4-410 to maximize
- 634 resources and impact; and
- 635 [~~(ii)~~] (B) grant awards that consider both rural and non-rural applicants,
- 636 recognizing regional workforce needs and program readiness; and
- 637 [~~(d)~~] (iv) allow an LEA to propose [~~a catalyst~~] an APEX center collocated on the
- 638 campus of an institution of higher education if the application includes evidence
- 639 of an agreement between the LEA and the institution of higher education.
- 640 (b) The LEA:

- 641 (i) shall direct the coordination with local postsecondary institutions and industry
642 described in Subsection (7)(a)(i)(B) in a manner that the LEA determines is in the
643 best interest of the program; and
- 644 (ii) may tailor the level of collaboration described in Subsection (7)(a)(i)(B) to the
645 individual needs of each program and of each offering within the program.
- 646 (c) Nothing in Subsection (7)(a)(i)(G) allows the director to prioritize an LEA with more
647 students over an LEA with fewer students.
- 648 (8)(a) An LEA that receives a grant shall use program funds to plan for, create, establish,
649 enhance, or expand an APEX center that:
- 650 (i) provides learning experiences and instruction that:
- 651 (A) replicates professional environments and workplace practices;
652 (B) builds leadership skills;
653 (C) builds durable professional skills;
654 (D) allows students to advance as the students demonstrate proficiency through
655 well-defined metrics;
656 (E) uses student projects that address the specific needs or objectives of industry
657 partners;
658 (F) incorporates industry-standard tools, technologies, and methods;
659 (G) provides opportunities for students to develop a product or presentation that
660 the students or an industry partner shares with an audience; and
661 (H) facilitates mentorship by industry professionals to guide and evaluate the
662 student's work;
- 663 (ii) aligns programming with labor market needs and local industry demands;
- 664 (iii) establishes or enhances partnerships with:
- 665 (A) local industries and employers to ensure workforce relevance; or
666 (B) as the LEA determines, technical colleges, degree-granting institutions, or
667 other postsecondary entities to support postsecondary transitions for students;
- 668 (iv) addresses gaps in regional workforce training or opportunities;
- 669 (v) incorporates:
- 670 (A) career and technical student organizations as the LEA determines relevant;
671 (B) advisory boards with representation from local industries and workforce
672 experts;
673 (C) professional learning opportunities for instructors to improve
674 workforce-focused skills; and

- 675 (D) strategies for using labor market data to refine and improve program offerings;
676 (vi) focuses on the unique needs and circumstances of the local student body,
677 community, and industry partners; and
678 (vii) aligns with state board standards for CTE quality.
- 679 [(a)] (b) An LEA that receives a grant:
- 680 (i) may coordinate and collaborate with the Utah Board of Higher Education or an
681 individual institution of higher education; and
682 (ii) shall submit an annual report to the state board.
- 683 [(b)] (c) The report described in Subsection (8)(b) shall include:
- 684 (i) the use of grant funds;
685 (ii) progress in meeting proposed goals and benchmarks, including student
686 proficiency measurements using the well-defined metrics described in Subsection
687 (6)(b)(viii);
688 (iii) updates on partnerships with industry and postsecondary institutions;
689 (iv) a demonstration of the alignment of programming with labor market data; and
690 (v) a description of student participation and outcomes.
- 691 [(c)] (d) The state board shall ensure that awarded funds:
- 692 (i) are used in accordance with an LEA's application; and
693 (ii) that are not used are returned for reallocation.
- 694 [(d)] (e) Upon request, the director shall submit a report on the program to the Education
695 Interim Committee and the Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee.
- 696 (9) The Talent Ready Utah Program described in Section 53H-13-303 and the Utah Leading
697 through Effective, Actionable, and Dynamic Education established in Section
698 53E-10-702, shall collaborate with the state board to develop and execute a marketing
699 and outreach plan for the [~~Catalyst Center~~] Applied Professional Education Experience
700 Grant Program.
- 701 (10) Talent Ready Utah and the Utah Leading through Effective, Actionable, and Dynamic
702 Education shall:
- 703 (a) execute the marketing and outreach plan described in Subsection (9); and
704 (b) submit an annual report to the state board that includes:
- 705 (i) the number of LEAs reached through marketing efforts;
706 (ii) a description of outreach activities and events conducted; and
707 (iii) feedback from LEAs regarding program accessibility and clarity.
- 708 (11) The state board:

(a) may provide up to 1% of the funds appropriated by the Legislature as described in Section 53F-9-204 to administer the program;

(b) in fiscal year 2026, shall provide up to 1% of the funds appropriated by the Legislature as described in Section 53F-9-204 to Talent Ready Utah and the Utah Leading through Effective, Actionable, and Dynamic Education for the purposes described in Subsections (9) and (10); and

(c) shall make rules in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, to implement this Subsection (11).

Section 6. Section **53F-9-204** is amended to read:

53F-9-204 . Public Education Economic Stabilization Restricted Account.

(1) There is created within the Uniform School Fund a restricted account known as the "Public Education Economic Stabilization Restricted Account."

(2)(a) Except as provided in Subsection (2)(b), the account shall be funded from the following revenue sources:

(i) 15% of the difference between, as determined by the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst:

(A) the estimated amount of ongoing Income Tax Fund and Uniform School Fund revenue available for the Legislature to appropriate for the next fiscal year; and

(B) the amount of ongoing appropriations from the Income Tax Fund and Uniform School Fund in the current fiscal year; and

(ii) other appropriations as the Legislature may designate.

(b) If the appropriation described in Subsection (2)(a) would cause the ongoing appropriations to the account to exceed 11% of Uniform School Fund appropriations described in Section 53F-9-201.1 for the same fiscal year, the Legislature shall appropriate only those funds necessary to ensure that the ongoing appropriations to the account equal 11% of Uniform School Fund appropriations for that fiscal year.

(3) Subject to the availability of ongoing appropriations to the account, in accordance with Utah Constitution, Article X, Section 5, Subsection (4), the ongoing appropriation to the account shall be used to fund:

(a) except for a year described in Subsection (3)(b) or (c), one-time appropriations to the public education system, including at least \$65,000,000 to the Catalyst Center Grant Program described in Section [53E-3-507.1] 53F-5-224;

(b) the Minimum School Program for a year in which Income Tax Fund revenue and Uniform School Fund revenue are insufficient to fund:

- (i) ongoing appropriations to the public education system; and
- (ii) enrollment growth and inflation estimates, as defined in Section 53F-9-201.1; and
- (c) the minimum basic local amount as defined in Section 53F-2-301 for a year in which the minimum basic tax rate, as defined in Section 53F-2-301, is insufficient to generate the amount described in Subsection 53F-2-301(2)(a).

(4)(a) The account shall earn interest.

- (b) All interest earned on account money shall be deposited in the account.

(5) On or before December 31, 2023, and every three years thereafter, the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst shall:

- (a) review the percentages described in Subsections (2)(a)(i) and (2)(b); and
- (b) recommend to the Executive Appropriations Committee any changes based on the review described in Subsection (5)(a).

(6) In preparing budget bills for a given fiscal year, the Executive Appropriations Committee shall make the one-time appropriations described in Subsection (3)(a) by appropriating at least the lesser of 10% of the total amount of the one-time appropriations to:

- (a) the cost of providing 32 paid professional hours for teachers in accordance with Section 53F-7-203;
- (b) the amount to make the distribution required under Section 53F-2-527;
- (c) the cost of the Stipends for Future Educators Grant Program described in Section 53F-5-223; and
- (d) the cost of the Rural School Sports Facilities Grant Program described in Section 53F-10-303.

(7) No later than October 15 of each year, the state board shall report to the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst an estimated cost for each of the one-time appropriations described in Subsection (6).

Section 7. Section **53G-8-213** is amended to read:

53G-8-213 . Reintegration plan for student alleged to have committed violent felony or weapon offense.

(1) As used in this section, "multidisciplinary team" means:

- (a) the local education agency;
- (b) the juvenile court;
- (c) the Division of Juvenile Justice and Youth Services;
- (d) a school safety and security specialist designated under Section 53G-8-701.6;

(e) school safety and security director designated under Section 53G-8-701.8;

(f) a school resource officer if applicable; and

(g) any other relevant party that should be involved in a reintegration plan.

(2) If ~~[a school district]~~ an LEA receives a notification from the juvenile court or a law enforcement agency that a student was arrested for, charged with, or adjudicated in the juvenile court for a serious offense, the LEA and the relevant school shall develop a reintegration plan for the student with a multidisciplinary team, the student, and the student's parent or guardian, within five school days after the day on which the ~~[school]~~ LEA receives a notification.

(3) The relevant school described in Subsection (2) may deny admission to the student until the school completes the reintegration plan under Subsection (2).

(4) The reintegration plan under Subsection (2) shall address:

(a) a behavioral intervention for the student;

(b) a short-term mental health or counseling service for the student;

(c) an academic intervention for the student; and

(d) if the serious offense was directed at a school employee or another student within the school, notification of the reintegration plan to that school employee or student and the student's parent.

(5) ~~[A school district]~~ An LEA may not reintegrate a student into a school where:

(a) a student or staff member has a protective order against the student being reintegrated; or

(b) a student or staff member is the victim of a sexual crime or forcible felony committed by the student being reintegrated.

(6)(a) Notwithstanding Subsection (2), ~~[a school district]~~ an LEA may elect to not integrate a student into a school if the student has committed, or allegedly committed, a forcible felony.

(b) If ~~[a school district]~~ an LEA elects to not integrate a student under Subsection (6)(a), the ~~[school district]~~ LEA shall provide alternative education options for the student.

(7) A reintegration plan under this section is classified as a protected record under Section 63G-2-305.

(8) All other records of disclosures under this section are governed by Title 63G, Chapter 2, Government Records Access and Management Act, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1232g.

Section 8. Section **53G-8-701.5** is amended to read:

53G-8-701.5 . School safety needs assessment -- School safety personnel --**Alternative requirements.**

(1)(a) In accordance with Subsections (1)(c) through (e), no later than October 15 of an applicable year, an LEA shall:

- (i) ensure a school safety needs assessment the state security chief selects in collaboration with the school safety center is conducted in accordance with Subsection (1)(b) for each school or K-12 campus within the LEA to determine the needs and deficiencies regarding:
 - (A) appropriate school safety personnel, including necessary supports, training, and policy creation for the personnel;
 - (B) physical building security and safety, including required upgrades to facilities and safety technology;
 - (C) a school's current threat and emergency response protocols, including any emergency response agreements with local law enforcement;
 - (D) cardiac emergency preparedness, including an inventory of whether automated external defibrillators are present and accessible, maintenance status, and current staff training offerings; and
 - (E) compliance with universal access key box requirements under Section 53G-8-805; and

(ii) report the results of the school safety needs assessment for each school within the LEA to the state security chief and the School Safety Center.

(b)(i) The school safety specialist described in Section 53G-8-701.6, in collaboration with the county security chief or, regarding the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, the state security chief, and with the local law enforcement of relevant jurisdiction over the school as described in Section 53-25-701, shall conduct the school safety needs assessment for each school.

(ii) A school safety and security director may fulfill the role of a school safety and security specialist in conducting the school safety needs assessment.

(c) The school safety needs assessment required under Subsection (1)(a)(i) shall be conducted at least once every three years for each school or K-12 campus.

(d) An LEA may implement a rotating or staggered schedule for conducting school safety needs assessments among the buildings within the LEA, provided that:

- (i) each school within a K-12 campus is assessed at least once every three years; and
- (ii) the LEA documents the rotating or staggered assessment schedule and shares this

- 845 schedule with the state security chief, the School Safety Center, the county
846 security chief regarding a school other than the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the
847 Blind, and the local law enforcement of relevant jurisdiction as described in
848 Section 53-25-701.
- 849 (e) The LEA shall update the assessment schedule as necessary to ensure compliance
850 with the three-year assessment requirement under Subsection (1)(c).
- 851 (f) The state board shall use the results of the school safety needs assessment for each
852 school within an LEA to award a grant to an LEA in accordance with Section
853 53F-5-220.
- 854 (g) Any information or record detailing a school's needs assessment results is:
- 855 (i) a private, controlled, or protected record under Title 63G, Chapter 2, Government
856 Records Access and Management Act; and
- 857 (ii) available only to:
- 858 (A) the state security chief;
- 859 (B) the School Safety Center;
- 860 (C) members of an LEA governing board;
- 861 (D) administrators of the LEA and school the needs assessment concerns;
- 862 (E) only to the extent necessary to award a grant under Section 53F-5-220, the
863 state board;
- 864 (F) the applicable school safety personnel described in Subsection (2);
- 865 (G) a local law enforcement agency that would respond to the school in case of an
866 emergency; and
- 867 (H) the county security chief regarding a school other than the Utah Schools for
868 the Deaf and the Blind.
- 869 (h) An individual who intentionally or knowingly provides the information described in
870 Subsection (1)(g) to an individual or entity not listed in Subsection (1)(g)(ii) is guilty
871 of a class B misdemeanor.
- 872 (2)(a) An LEA shall ensure each school within the LEA has the following school safety
873 personnel:
- 874 (i) a school safety and security specialist described in Section 53G-8-701.6; and
- 875 (ii) based on the results of the needs assessment described in Subsection (1), at least
876 one of the following:
- 877 (A) a school resource officer;
- 878 (B) a school guardian; or

- 879 (C) an armed school security guard.
- 880 (b) In addition to the school safety personnel described in Subsection (2)(a), an LEA
881 shall designate a school safety and security director described in Section 53G-8-701.8.
- 882 (c) The same individual may serve in more than one of the roles listed in Subsections
883 (2)(a) and (b) if the school notifies the School Safety Center and the state security
884 chief of the decision to have the same individual serve in multiple roles as described
885 in this Subsection (2).
- 886 (d) An LEA may implement the requirements of Subsection (2)(a)(ii) before the LEA
887 has completed the school safety needs assessment described in Subsection (1).
- 888 (e) The state security chief in consultation with the School Safety Center shall establish
889 a timeline for an LEA to comply with the school safety personnel requirements of
890 this Subsection (2).
- 891 (3)(a) An LEA, school administrator, or private school may apply to the state security
892 chief for an approved alternative to the requirements described in:
- 893 (i) Section 53-22-105;
894 (ii) this section;
895 (iii) Section 53G-8-701.6;
896 (iv) Section 53G-8-701.8; and
897 (v) Section 53G-8-704.
- 898 (b) In approving or denying an application described in Subsection (3)(a), the state
899 security chief may consider factors that impact a school or LEA's ability to adhere to
900 the requirements of this section, including the school or LEA's:
- 901 (i) population size;
902 (ii) staffing needs or capacity;
903 (iii) geographic location;
904 (iv) available funding; or
905 (v) general demonstration of need for an alternative to the requirements of this
906 section.
- 907 (4) A private school shall identify an individual at the private school to serve as the safety
908 liaison with the local law enforcement of relevant jurisdiction and the state security chief.
- 909 Section 9. Section **53G-8-701.6** is amended to read:
- 910 **53G-8-701.6 . School safety and security specialist.**
- 911 (1) As used in this section, "principal" means the chief administrator at a public school,
912 including:

- 913 (a) a school principal;
- 914 (b) a charter school director; or
- 915 (c) the superintendent of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.
- 916 (2)(a) Subject to Subsection (2)(b) and except as provided in Subsection 53G-8-701.5(3),
- 917 every campus within an LEA shall designate a school safety and security specialist
- 918 from the employees of the relevant campus.
- 919 (b) The school safety and security specialist:
- 920 (i) may not be a principal; and
- 921 (ii) may be the school safety and security director at one campus within the LEA.
- 922 (3) The school safety and security specialist shall:
- 923 (a) report directly to the principal;
- 924 (b) oversee school safety and security practices to ensure a safe and secure school
- 925 environment for students and staff;
- 926 (c) ensure adherence with all policies, procedures, protocols, rules, and regulations
- 927 relating to school safety and security through collaborating and maintaining effective
- 928 communications with the following as applicable:
- 929 (i) the principal;
- 930 (ii) school staff;
- 931 (iii) the school resource officer;
- 932 (iv) the armed school security guard;
- 933 (v) the school guardian;
- 934 (vi) local law enforcement;
- 935 (vii) the county security chief regarding a school other than the Utah Schools for the
- 936 Deaf and the Blind;
- 937 (viii) the school safety and security director;
- 938 (ix) the LEA; and
- 939 (x) school-based behavioral and mental health professionals;
- 940 (d) in collaboration with the county security chief or, regarding the Utah Schools for the
- 941 Deaf and the Blind, the state security chief, and with the local law enforcement of
- 942 relevant jurisdiction over the school as described in Section 53-25-701:
- 943 (i) conduct the school safety needs assessment described in Section 53G-8-701.5;
- 944 (ii) in accordance with Sections 53-25-701 and 53G-8-701.5, submit the completed
- 945 assessments to the School Safety Center created in Section 53G-8-802 by October
- 946 15 of each year; and

- (iii) review the results of the school safety needs assessment to recommend and implement improvements to school facilities, policies, procedures, protocols, rules, and regulations relating to school safety and security;
- (e) participate on the multidisciplinary team that the school establishes;
- (f) conduct a behavioral threat assessment when the school safety and security specialist deems necessary using an evidence-based tool the state security chief recommends in consultation with the school safety center and the Office of Substance Use and Mental Health;
- (g) regularly monitor and report to the principal, local law enforcement, and, if applicable, the LEA superintendent or designee, security risks for the school resulting from:
- (i) issues with school facilities; or
- (ii) the implementation of practices, policies, procedures, and protocols relating to school safety and security;
- (h) coordinate with local first responder agencies to implement and monitor safety and security drills in accordance with policy and applicable procedures and protocols;
- (i) ensure that school staff, and, when appropriate, students, receive training on and remain current on the school's safety and security procedures and protocols;
- (j) following an event where security of the school has been significantly compromised, organize a debriefing with the individuals listed in Subsection (3)(c) following the recommendations from the state security chief, in collaboration with the School Safety Center, regarding strengthening school safety and security practices, policies, procedures, and protocols;
- (k) abide by any LEA, school, or law enforcement agency policy outlining the chain of command;
- (l) during an emergency, coordinate with the following individuals as applicable, the:
- (i) school resource officer;
- (ii) school guardians;
- (iii) armed school security guards;
- (iv) school administrators; and
- (v) responding law enforcement officers;
- (m) follow any LEA, school, or law enforcement agency student privacy policies, including state and federal privacy laws;
- (n) participate in an annual training the state security chief selects in consultation with

- 981 the School Safety Center; and
- 982 (o) remain current on:
- 983 (i) a comprehensive school guideline the state security chief selects;
- 984 (ii) the duties of a school safety and security specialist described in this Subsection (3);
- 985 and
- 986 (iii) the school's emergency response plan.

- 987 (4) During an active emergency at the school, the school safety and security specialist is
- 988 subordinate to any responding law enforcement officers.

989 Section 10. Section **53G-8-701.8** is amended to read:

990 **53G-8-701.8 . School safety and security director.**

- 991 (1) Except as provided in Subsection 53G-8-701.5(3), an LEA shall designate a school
- 992 safety and security director as the LEA point of contact for the county security chief
- 993 regarding a school other than the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, local law
- 994 enforcement, and the state security chief.
- 995 (2) A school safety and security director shall:
- 996 (a) participate in and satisfy the training requirements as follows:
- 997 (i) only once, the training requirements described in Section 53-22-105 for school
- 998 guardians; and
- 999 (ii) the school resource officer and administrator training the state security chief
- 1000 approves in consultation with the School Safety Center;
- 1001 (b) if serving as a backup school guardian, satisfy all requirements described in
- 1002 53-22-105;
- 1003 (c) if the designee is an employee of an LEA, participate on the multidisciplinary team
- 1004 the LEA establishes;
- 1005 (d) coordinate security responses among, if applicable, the following individuals in the
- 1006 LEA that employs the school safety and security director:
- 1007 (i) school safety and security specialists;
- 1008 (ii) school resource officers;
- 1009 (iii) armed school security guards; and
- 1010 (iv) school guardians; and
- 1011 (e) collaborate and maintain effective communications with local law enforcement, a
- 1012 county security chief or, regarding the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, the
- 1013 state security chief, the LEA, and school-based behavioral and mental health
- 1014 professionals to ensure adherence with all policies, procedures, protocols, rules, and

regulations relating to school safety and security.

(3) A school safety and security director:

(a) does not have authority to act in a law enforcement capacity; and

(b) may, at the LEA that employs the director:

(i) take actions necessary to prevent or abate an active threat; and

(ii) temporarily detain an individual when the school safety and security director has reasonable cause to believe the individual has committed or is about to commit a forcible felony.

(4) Notwithstanding Subsection 76-11-205(4), if a school safety and security director is carrying a firearm, the school safety and security director shall carry the school safety and security director's firearm in a concealed manner and may not, unless during an active threat, display or open carry a firearm while on school grounds.

(5) A school may use the services of the school safety and security director on a temporary basis to satisfy the school safety personnel requirement of Subsection 53G-8-701.5(2).

(6) The state security chief shall:

(a) for each school safety and security director, track each school safety and security director by collecting the photograph and the name and contact information for each school safety and security director; and

(b) make the information described in Subsection (6)(a) readily available to each law enforcement agency in the state categorized by LEA.

Section 11. Section **53G-9-702** is amended to read:

53G-9-702 . Youth suicide prevention programs -- State board to develop model programs.

(1) As used in the section:

(a) "Elementary grades" means:

(i) kindergarten through grade 5; and

(ii) if the associated middle or junior high school does not include grade 6, grade 6.

(b) "Intervention" means an effort to prevent a student from attempting suicide.

(c) "Postvention" means mental health intervention after a suicide attempt or death to prevent or contain contagion.

(d) "Program" means a youth suicide prevention program described in Subsection (2).

(e) "Public education suicide prevention coordinator" means an individual designated by the state board as described in Subsection (4).

(f) "Secondary grades" means:

- 1049 (i) grades 7 through 12; and
1050 (ii) if a middle or junior high school includes grade 6, grade 6.
- 1051 (g) "State suicide prevention coordinator" means the state suicide prevention coordinator
1052 described in Section 26B-5-611.
- 1053 (2) In collaboration with the public education suicide prevention coordinator, a school
1054 district or charter school shall implement a youth suicide prevention program, which, in
1055 collaboration with the training, programs, and initiatives described in Section 53G-9-607,
1056 shall include programs and training to address:
- 1057 (a) for elementary grades and secondary grades:
- 1058 (i) life-affirming education, including on the concepts of resiliency, healthy habits,
1059 self-care, problem solving, and conflict resolution;
- 1060 (ii) methods of strengthening the family; and
- 1061 (iii) methods of strengthening a youth's relationships in the school and community;
1062 and
- 1063 (b) for secondary grades:
- 1064 (i) prevention of youth suicide;
- 1065 (ii) decreasing the risk of suicide among youth who are:
- 1066 (A) not accepted by family for any reason, including lesbian, gay, bisexual,
1067 transgender, or questioning youth; or
- 1068 (B) suffer from bullying;
- 1069 (iii) youth suicide intervention; and
- 1070 (iv) postvention for family, students, and faculty.
- 1071 (3) Each school district and charter school shall ensure that the youth suicide prevention
1072 program described in Subsection (2):
- 1073 (a) considers appropriate coordination with the following prevention programs:
- 1074 (i) the prevention of bullying and cyber-bullying, as those terms are defined in
1075 Section 53G-9-601; and
- 1076 (ii) the prevention of underage drinking of alcohol and substance abuse under Section
1077 53G-10-406; and
- 1078 (b) includes provisions to ensure that the school district or charter school promptly
1079 communicates with the parent or guardian of a student in accordance with Section
1080 53G-9-604.
- 1081 (4) The state board shall:
- 1082 (a) designate a public education suicide prevention coordinator; and

(b) in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services and the state suicide prevention coordinator, develop model programs to provide to school districts and charter schools:

(i) program training; and

(ii) resources regarding the required components described in Subsections (2)(a) and (b).

(5) The public education suicide prevention coordinator shall:

(a) oversee the youth suicide prevention programs of school districts and charter schools; and

(b) coordinate prevention and postvention programs, services, and efforts with the state suicide prevention coordinator.

(6) A public school suicide prevention program may allow school personnel to ask a student questions related to youth suicide prevention, intervention, or postvention.

(7)(a) Subject to legislative appropriation and except as provided in Section 53F-2-525, the state board may distribute money to a school district or charter school to be used to implement evidence-based practices and programs, or emerging best practices and programs, for preventing suicide in the school district or charter school.

(b) The state board shall ensure that an LEA's allocation of funds from the board's distribution of money under Subsection (7)(a) provides[-] :

(i) an amount equal to at least \$1,000 per school[-] ; or

(ii) if appropriations are not available to provide the amount described in Subsection (7)(b)(i), a commensurately lesser amount.

(c)(i) A school shall use money allocated to the school under Subsection (7)(b) to implement evidence-based practices and programs, or emerging best practices and programs, for preventing suicide.

(ii) Each school may select the evidence-based practices and programs, or emerging best practices and programs, for preventing suicide that the school implements.

(8) An LEA may not charge indirect costs to the program.

Section 12. **Effective Date.**

This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.