

**Early Literacy**

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Ann Millner**

House Sponsor: Karen M. Peterson

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**LONG TITLE****General Description:**

This bill establishes a framework of literacy interventions in kindergarten through grade 3 within the public education system.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

- defines terms;
- establishes a third-grade level reading goal for 2030;
- requires a local education agency (LEA) to, based on the student's performance on a benchmark reading assessment, provide a student with an individualized reading plan that identifies specific reading interventions to remediate a reading deficiency, including considering retention in lower grades and requiring retention in grade 3 except in cases of certain good cause exemptions;
- requires regional education service agencies (RESAs) and certain school districts to provide formal professional learning and information training in the science of reading, including to employees of charter schools located within the relevant RESA or school district;
- dedicates a certain amount of one-time funding each year from the Public Education Economic Stabilization Restricted Account to provide paraprofessionals who support literacy;
- requires certain school performance monitoring;
- excludes the practice of "three-cueing" from an LEA's reading curriculum;
- requires the State Board of Education (state board) to distribute funding to regional education service agencies and certain school districts for literacy coaching and training;
- requires the Utah Board of Higher Education to partner with the state board in certain duties regarding teacher preparation programs;
- requires the use of a certain portion of a school's allocation under the Teacher and Student Success Program on literacy interventions if the school's third grade students score

below the statewide benchmark goal;

- includes science of reading and literacy as components of an elementary educator evaluation;

- requires the Center for the School of the Future at Utah State University, in collaboration with the Utah Board of Higher Education, to develop a plan to improve science of reading knowledge and ability in teacher graduates from a state institution of higher education; and

- makes technical and conforming changes.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

This bill provides a special effective date.

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

**AMENDS:**

**53E-3-1001 (Effective 07/01/26)**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 285 and further amended by Revisor Instructions, Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 285

**53E-3-1003 (Effective 07/01/26)**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 285

**53E-4-307 (Effective 07/01/26)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 60

**53E-6-302 (Effective 07/01/26)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 51

**53F-9-204 (Effective 07/01/26)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapters 413, 433

**53G-7-205 (Effective 07/01/26)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2019, Chapter 293

**53G-7-1304 (Effective 07/01/26)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 372

**53G-7-1305 (Effective 07/01/26)**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2019, Chapter 505

**53G-11-507 (Effective 07/01/26) (Repealed 07/01/29)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 484

**ENACTS:**

**53F-2-424 (Effective 07/01/26)**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**53G-10-801 (Effective 07/01/26)**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**53G-10-802 (Effective 07/01/26)**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**53G-10-803 (Effective 07/01/26)**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**53G-10-805 (Effective 07/01/26)**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**RENUMBERS AND AMENDS:**

**53G-10-804 (Effective 07/01/26)**, (Renumbered from 53E-3-1002, as enacted by

Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 285)

**53G-10-806 (Effective 07/01/26)**, (Renumbered from 53G-10-306, as enacted by

Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 285)

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

Section 1. Section **53E-3-1001** is amended to read:

**53E-3-1001 (Effective 07/01/26). Statewide goal -- Emphasis on early literacy.**

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Benchmark reading assessment" means the statewide benchmark assessment in reading described in Section 53E-4-307 that a school district or charter school administers to students in kindergarten through grade 3 at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year.

(b) "Reading on grade level" means that a student scores at or above the benchmark for the relevant grade level on the benchmark reading assessment.

(2) To achieve a strenuous statewide goal of [70% in third grade-level proficiency on the state-administered reading assessment by July 1, 2027,] 80% of students reading on grade level on the end-of-year benchmark reading assessment in grade 3 by July 1, 2030:

(a) the state board shall:

[(1)] (i) analyze, align, and target resources, including digital software and tools, in existing state programs and the programs enacted in Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 285, as appropriate, to support early literacy within the state; and

[(2)] (ii) identify opportunities to incentivize and support LEAs and elementary schools to analyze data, align plans, and target resources from existing local and LEA programs to support early literacy within the state, resulting in a comprehensive statewide alignment of early literacy plans[-] ; and

(b) each LEA shall engage in targeted literacy interventions in accordance with Section 53G-10-306.

Section 2. Section **53E-3-1003** is amended to read:

**53E-3-1003 (Effective 07/01/26). Science of reading.**

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Educator preparation program" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53E-6-302.

(b) "Panel" means the science of reading panel that the state board establishes in accordance with this section.

(c) "Science of reading" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53G-10-801.

~~[(e)]~~ (d) "University teacher preparation program" means a program described in Section 53E-6-302.

(2) The state board shall establish an expert science of reading panel consisting of up to six experts who have:

(a) knowledge and a research background in the science of reading and the science of reading instruction; and

(b) experience translating the science of reading into effective reading instructional practices.

(3) The panel shall:

(a) meet no less than once every quarter;

(b) provide expertise to and serve in a consultancy capacity to the state board on implementation of:

(i) the early literacy emphases described in Section 53E-3-1001; and

(ii) educator preparation programs;

(c) in consultation with the state board:

(i) provide advanced professional learning opportunities in the science of reading and the science of reading instruction for public schools and educator preparation programs as needed to expand statewide capacity;

(ii) partner with ULEAD, as that term is defined in Section 53E-10-701, to develop and implement an online repository of digital science of reading and science of reading instruction resources that is accessible to public school teachers, school leaders, parents, and educator preparation programs and associated faculty;

(iii) develop professional learning modules to support teachers and school leaders; and

(iv) coordinate with educator preparation programs, university teacher preparation program faculty, deans of education, and literacy leadership fellows to advance the science of reading and the science of reading instruction; and

(d) take part in the hiring of the additional faculty members~~[-described in Subsection 53E-6-302(6)]~~, with two panel members participating in the hiring process.

(4) The state board may collaborate with panel members to conduct periodic reviews of:

(a) student outcome data;

(b) science of reading and science of reading instruction implementation fidelity in public schools and educator preparation programs through onsite visits; and

(c) advise LEAs regarding the science of reading and the science of reading instruction curriculum and intervention programs.

(5) A panel member:

(a) may not receive compensation or benefits for the member's service on the panel; and

(b) may receive per diem and reimbursement for travel expenses that the panel member incurs as a panel member at the rates that the Division of Finance establishes under:

(i) Sections 63A-3-106 and 63A-3-107; and

(ii) rules that the Division of Finance makes under Sections 63A-3-106 and 63A-3-107.

(6) The state board shall provide staff support to the panel.

Section 3. Section **53E-4-307** is amended to read:

**53E-4-307 (Effective 07/01/26). Benchmark assessments in reading -- Report to parent.**

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Benchmark reading assessment" means an assessment that:

(i) measures key literacy skills, including phonemic awareness, sound-symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding and encoding skills, and comprehension, to determine a student's specific strengths and weaknesses in a skill area; and

(ii) a school district or charter school administers to students in kindergarten through grade 3 at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year.

~~[(a)]~~ (b) "Competency" means a demonstrable acquisition of a specified knowledge, skill, or ability that has been organized into a hierarchical arrangement leading to higher levels of knowledge, skill, or ability.

~~[(b)]~~ "Diagnostic assessment" means an assessment that measures key literacy skills, including phonemic awareness, sound-symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding and encoding skills, and comprehension, to determine a student's specific strengths and weaknesses in a skill area.]

(c) "Dyslexia" means a learning disorder that:

(i) is neurological in origin and is characterized by difficulties with:

(A) accurate or fluent word recognition; and

(B) poor spelling and decoding abilities; and

(ii) typically results from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of

effective classroom instruction.

(d) "Evidence-based" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53G-11-303.

(e) "Evidence-informed" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53G-11-303.

(2) The state board shall approve a benchmark assessment for use statewide by school districts and charter schools to assess the reading competency of students in grades 1 through 6 as provided by this section.

(3) A school district or charter school shall:

(a) administer benchmark assessments to students in kindergarten and grades 1, 2, and 3 at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year using the benchmark assessment approved by the state board; and

(b) after administering a benchmark assessment, report the results to a student's parent.

(4)(a) If a benchmark assessment or supplemental reading assessment indicates a student lacks competency in a reading skill, is demonstrating characteristics of dyslexia, or is lagging behind other students in the student's grade in acquiring a reading skill, the school district or charter school shall:

~~[(i) administer diagnostic assessments to the student;]~~

~~[(ii)]~~ (i) using data from the ~~[diagnostic]~~ benchmark reading assessment, provide specific, focused, and individualized intervention or tutoring to develop the reading skill, in accordance with Title 53G, Chapter 10, Part 8, Literacy Interventions, potentially including the creation of an individual reading plan, as that term is defined in Section 53G-10-801;

~~[(iii)]~~ (ii) administer formative assessments and progress monitoring at recommended levels for the benchmark assessment to measure the success of the focused intervention;

~~[(iv)]~~ (iii) in addition to the notice described in Section 53G-10-802:

(A) inform the student's parent of activities that the parent may engage in with the student to assist the student in improving reading proficiency; and

~~[(v)]~~ (B) provide information to the parent regarding appropriate interventions available to the student outside of the regular school day that may include tutoring, before and after school programs, or summer school; and

~~[(vi)]~~ (iv) provide instructional materials that are evidence-informed for core instruction and evidence-based for intervention and supplemental instruction.

(b) Nothing in this section or in Section 53F-4-203 or 53G-11-303 requires a reading software product to demonstrate the statistically significant effect size described in

Subsection 53G-11-303(1)(a) in order to be used as an instructional material described in Subsection (4)(a)(vi).

(5)(a) In accordance with Section 53F-4-201 and except as provided in Subsection (5)(b), the state board shall contract with one or more educational technology providers for a benchmark assessment system for reading for students in kindergarten through grade 6.

(b) If revenue is insufficient for the benchmark assessment system for the grades described in Subsection (5)(a), the state board shall first prioritize funding a benchmark assessment for students in kindergarten through grade 3.

(6) A student with dyslexia is only eligible for special education services if the student meets federal eligibility criteria.

Section 4. Section **53E-6-302** is amended to read:

**53E-6-302 (Effective 07/01/26). Educator preparation programs.**

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Center" means the Center for the School of the Future at Utah State University established in Section 53H-4-304.

(b) "Educator preparation program" means:

(i) a university teacher education program; or

(ii) a program that prepares individuals using an alternative pathway to licensure, as the state board provides, that does not include content or time requirements that conflict with the content or time requirements described in rule made by the state board in accordance with Subsection (2).

~~[(b)]~~ (c) "Required literacy preparation assessment" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53E-6-301.

~~[(d)]~~ (d) "Science of reading" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53G-10-801.

~~[(e)]~~ (e) "University teacher preparation program" means a program that an institution of higher education offers to prepare educators for licensure.

(2) In accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, the state board shall make rules that establish standards for approval of an educator preparation program.

(3) The state board shall ensure that standards adopted under Subsection (2):

(a) meet or exceed generally recognized national standards for preparation of educators; and

(b) include requirements for educator preparation programs to:

- 235 (i) provide instruction in the science of reading; and
- 236 (ii) prepare license applicants to pass the required literacy preparation assessment at
- 237 no cost to the applicants for the preparation, including providing ongoing
- 238 preparation for up to three total attempts of the required literacy preparation
- 239 assessment.
- 240 (4) The Utah Board of Higher Education and the state board shall each designate an
- 241 employee of [the-state] each board's staff to jointly:
- 242 (a) work with education deans of state institutions of higher education to coordinate
- 243 university teacher preparation programs that may include:
- 244 (i) monitoring courses for university teacher preparation programs; and
- 245 (ii) working with course instructors for university teacher preparation programs;
- 246 (b) act as a liaison between:
- 247 (i) the Utah Board of Higher Education;
- 248 (ii) the state board;
- 249 ~~[(ii)]~~ (iii) local school boards or charter school governing boards; and
- 250 ~~[(iii)]~~ (iv) representatives of university teacher preparation programs; and
- 251 (c) report the employee's findings and recommendations for the improvement of teacher
- 252 preparation programs to:
- 253 (i) the state board; and
- 254 (ii) education deans of state institutions of higher education.
- 255 (5) The state board, in consultation with the Utah Board of Higher Education, shall:
- 256 (a) in good faith, consider the findings and recommendations described in Subsection
- 257 (4)(c); and
- 258 (b) in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act,
- 259 make rules, as the state board determines is necessary, to implement
- 260 recommendations described in Subsection (4)(c).
- 261 ~~[(6) Subject to legislative appropriations, the Utah Board of Higher Education shall:]~~
- 262 ~~[(a) provide matching funds to each of the state's institutions of higher education with a~~
- 263 ~~university teacher preparation program:]~~
- 264 ~~[(i) to hire an additional faculty member who has training in the science of reading~~
- 265 ~~and the science of reading instruction; and]~~
- 266 ~~[(ii) in an amount equal to 75% of the cost of making the hire described in Subsection~~
- 267 ~~(6)(a) if the institution provides 25% of the cost; and]~~
- 268 ~~[(b) consult the state superintendent regarding:]~~



[~~(i) criteria for the hire described in Subsection (6)(a) that would qualify for a distribution of funding; and~~]

[~~(ii) an individual institution's fulfillment of the criteria described in Subsection (6)(b)(i) before distributing funding.~~]

(6) The center shall develop a plan, in collaboration with the Utah Board of Higher Education, to improve, for elementary teacher graduates and elementary administrator preparation graduates from a state institution of higher education:

(a) the knowledge of the science of reading; and

(b) the ability to apply the science of reading instruction with a focus on how the instruction leads to third-grade proficiency in reading and writing.

(7) An institution that hires an additional faculty member shall coordinate with the science of reading panel described in Section 53E-3-1003 to include two members of the panel in the institution's hiring process.

(8) The Utah Board of Higher Education and the state board shall jointly:

(a) monitor accreditation of university programs regarding the science of reading preparation described in Subsection (3)(b)[~~at the institutions described in Subsection (6)(a)~~]; and

(b)(i) develop strategies to provide support for preparation programs with low rates of passage on the required literacy preparation assessment; and

(ii) provide increasing levels of support to a preparation program with low rates of passage on the required literacy preparation assessment for two consecutive years.

Section 5. Section **53F-2-424** is enacted to read:

**53F-2-424 (Effective 07/01/26). Literacy interventions.**

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Member school district" means a school district that is a member of a specific regional education service agency.

(b) "Regional education service agency" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53G-4-410.

(2) Subject to legislative appropriations, the state board shall allocate the following for literacy coaching and training in accordance with Section 53G-10-804:

(a) a base funding amount of \$75,000 to each regional education service agency and to each school district that is not a member of a regional education service agency; and

(b) the remainder of legislative appropriations for literacy interventions under this section, distributed based on:

(i) for a school district that is not a member of a regional education service agency,  
the sum of:

(A) the school district's average daily membership; and

(B) the average daily membership of the school district's resident students who  
attend charter schools; and

(ii) for a regional education service agency, the sum of:

(A) the average daily membership within each member school district; and

(B) the average daily membership of each member school district's resident  
students who attend charter schools.

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

**53F-9-204 (Effective 07/01/26). 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;

- (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[-] :

- (a) 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) at least \$15,000,000 to provide paraprofessionals who support literacy;

- [(b)] (c) the amount to make the distribution required under Section 53F-2-527;

- [(c)] (d) the cost of the Stipends for Future Educators Grant Program described in Section 53F-5-223; and

- [(d)] (e) 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-7-205** is amended to read:

**53G-7-205 (Effective 07/01/26). Assessment of emerging and early reading skills**  
**-- Resources provided by school districts.**

(1) The Legislature recognizes that well-developed reading skills help:

- (a) children to succeed in school, develop self esteem, and build positive relationships

- 371 with others;
- 372 (b) young adults to become independent learners; and
- 373 (c) adults to become and remain productive members of a rapidly changing
- 374 technology-based society.
- 375 (2)(a) Each potential kindergarten student, the student's parent, and kindergarten
- 376 personnel at the student's school may participate in an assessment of the student's
- 377 reading and numeric skills.
- 378 (b) The state board, in cooperation with the state's school districts, may develop the
- 379 assessment instrument and any additional materials needed to implement and
- 380 supplement the assessment program.
- 381 (3) The potential kindergarten student's teacher may use the assessment in planning and
- 382 developing an instructional program to meet the student's identified needs.
- 383 (4)(a) Each school is encouraged to schedule the assessment early enough before the
- 384 kindergarten starting date so that a potential kindergarten student's parent has time to
- 385 develop the child's needed skills as identified by the assessment.
- 386 (b) Based on the assessment under Subsection (2), the school shall provide the potential
- 387 student's parent with[-] :
- 388 (i) appropriate resource materials to assist the parent at home in the student's literacy
- 389 development[-] ; and
- 390 (ii) information regarding the individualized reading plan process described in
- 391 Chapter 10, Part 8, Literacy Interventions.
- 392 Section 8. Section **53G-7-1304** is amended to read:
- 393 **53G-7-1304 (Effective 07/01/26). Program requirements -- LEA governing board**
- 394 **student success framework -- LEA distribution -- School allocation -- Reporting.**
- 395 (1)(a) To receive an LEA distribution, an LEA governing board shall:
- 396 (i) adopt an LEA governing board student success framework to provide guidelines
- 397 and processes for a school within the LEA governing board's LEA to follow in
- 398 developing a teacher and student success plan; and
- 399 (ii) submit the adopted LEA governing board student success framework to the state
- 400 board.
- 401 (b) An LEA governing board may include in the LEA governing board's student success
- 402 framework any means reasonably designed to improve school performance or student
- 403 academic achievement, including:
- 404 (i) school personnel stipends for taking on additional responsibility outside of a

- 405 typical work assignment;
- 406 (ii) professional learning;
- 407 (iii) additional school employees, including counselors, social workers, mental health
- 408 workers, tutors, media specialists, information technology specialists, or other
- 409 specialists;
- 410 (iv) technology;
- 411 (v) before- or after-school programs;
- 412 (vi) summer school programs;
- 413 (vii) community support programs or partnerships;
- 414 (viii) early childhood education;
- 415 (ix) class size reduction strategies;
- 416 (x) augmentation of existing programs;
- 417 (xi) the pilot program described in Section 53G-7-1307; or
- 418 (xii) other means.
- 419 (c) An LEA governing board student success framework may not support the use of
- 420 program money:
- 421 (i) to supplant funding for existing public education programs;
- 422 (ii) for district administration costs; or
- 423 (iii) for capital expenditures.
- 424 (2)(a) ~~[An]~~ Subject to Subsection (2)(e), an LEA governing board shall use an LEA
- 425 distribution as follows:
- 426 (i) for increases to base salary and salary driven benefits for school personnel that,
- 427 except as provided in Subsection (2)(c)(i), total 25% or less of the LEA
- 428 distribution; and
- 429 (ii) except as provided in Subsection (2)(b)(ii) and in accordance with Subsection (3),
- 430 for each school within the LEA governing board's LEA, an allocation that is equal
- 431 to the product of:
- 432 (A) the percentage of the school's prior year average daily membership compared
- 433 to the total prior year average daily membership for all schools in the LEA; and
- 434 (B) the remaining amount of the LEA governing board's LEA distribution after
- 435 subtracting the amounts described in Subsections (2)(a)(i) and (2)(b)(ii).
- 436 (b)(i) In accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act,
- 437 the state board shall make rules for an LEA governing board to calculate and
- 438 distribute a school allocation for a school in the school's first year of operation.

- 439 (ii) In accordance with Subsection (3) and the rules described in Subsection (2)(b)(i),  
440 an LEA governing board shall distribute a school allocation for a school in the  
441 school's first year of operation.
- 442 (c) Except as provided in Subsection (2)(d) or (2)(e), the LEA governing board of a  
443 school district may use up to 40% of an LEA distribution for the purposes described  
444 in Subsection (2)(a)(i), if:
- 445 (i) the LEA governing board has:
- 446 (A) approved a board local levy for the maximum amount allowed under Section  
447 53F-8-302; or
- 448 (B) after the LEA governing board has submitted an LEA governing board student  
449 success framework to the state board, increased the board local levy described  
450 in Section 53F-8-302 by at least .0001 per dollar of taxable value; and
- 451 (ii) the school district's average teacher salary is below the state average teacher  
452 salary described in Subsection [~~(2)(f)~~] (2)(g).
- 453 (d) The LEA governing board of a school district in a county of the fourth, fifth, or sixth  
454 class or the LEA governing board of a charter school may use up to 40% of an LEA  
455 distribution for the purposes described in Subsection (2)(a)(i), if the LEA's average  
456 teacher salary is below the state average teacher salary described in Subsection [~~(2)(f)~~]  
457 (2)(g).
- 458 (e) The LEA governing board of an LEA with a school performing below the statewide  
459 goal described in Section 53E-3-1001 for third-grade reading shall ensure that the  
460 school's teacher and student success plan that the LEA governing board approves in  
461 accordance with Section 53G-7-1305 allocates at least 50% of the school's total  
462 distribution for:
- 463 (i) evidence-based strategies and practices for addressing low literacy rates in  
464 alignment with the science of reading; and
- 465 (ii) reading interventions in accordance with Chapter 10, Part 8, Literacy  
466 Interventions.
- 467 [~~(e)~~] (f) An LEA governing board shall annually report information as requested by the  
468 state board for the state board to calculate a state average teacher salary.
- 469 [~~(f)~~] (g) The state board shall use the information described in Subsection (2)(c)(ii) to  
470 calculate a state average teacher salary amount and a state average teacher benefit  
471 amount.
- 472 (3) An LEA governing board shall allocate a school allocation to a school with a teacher

and student success plan that is approved as described in Section 53G-7-1305.

(4)(a) Except as provided in Subsection (4)(b), a school shall use a school allocation to implement the school's success plan.

(b) A school may use up to 5% of the school's school allocation to fund school personnel retention at the principal's discretion, not including uniform salary increases.

(c) A school may not use a school allocation for:

(i) capital expenditures; or

(ii) a purpose that is not supported by the LEA governing board student success framework for the school's LEA.

(5) A school that receives a school allocation shall annually:

(a) submit to the school's LEA governing board a description of:

(i) the budgeted and actual expenditures of the school's school allocation;

(ii) how the expenditures relate to the school's success plan; and

(iii) how the school measures the success of the school's participation in the program; and

(b) post on the school's website:

(i) the school's approved success plan;

(ii) a description of the school's school allocation budgeted and actual expenditures and how the expenditures help the school accomplish the school's success plan; and

(iii) the school's current level of performance, as described in Section 53G-7-1306, according to the indicators described in Section 53E-5-205 or 53E-5-206.

Section 9. Section **53G-7-1305** is amended to read:

**53G-7-1305 (Effective 07/01/26). Teacher and student success plans -- Plan review and approval.**

(1)(a) The principal of a school shall develop the school's teacher and student success plan:

(i) in accordance with the LEA governing board student success framework for the school's LEA;

(ii) by integrating school-specific goals and criteria for improving the school's performance within the state accountability system;[~~and~~]

(iii) if the school has a school turnaround plan as defined in Section 53E-5-301, in accordance with the school's school turnaround plan[~~;~~] ; and

(iv) if the school is performing below the statewide goal described in Section

- 507 53E-3-1001 for third-grade reading, in accordance with Subsection  
508 53G-7-1304(2)(e).
- 509 (b) A principal shall solicit input on developing a success plan from:  
510 (i) for a district school or charter school:  
511 (A) the school community council, as defined in Section 53G-7-1202; or  
512 (B) the charter trust land council, as described in Section 53G-7-1205;  
513 (ii) school-level educators;  
514 (iii) parents of students at the school; and  
515 (iv) school-level administrators.
- 516 (c) A principal may solicit input on developing a success plan from:  
517 (i) students;  
518 (ii) support professionals; or  
519 (iii) other community stakeholders.
- 520 (2)(a) The principal of a school shall submit a proposed success plan to the school's LEA  
521 governing board.
- 522 (b) An LEA governing board shall:  
523 (i) annually review each success plan submitted for a school within the LEA  
524 governing board's LEA;  
525 (ii) in a regularly scheduled LEA governing board meeting, approve or disapprove  
526 each submitted success plan; and  
527 (iii) upon disapproval of a success plan:  
528 (A) explain in writing the reason for disapproval;  
529 (B) make recommendations for revision; and  
530 (C) allow the principal who submitted the success plan to resubmit a revised plan  
531 for review and approval.
- 532 (3) An LEA governing board shall make the LEA governing board's best efforts to help a  
533 school complete the approval process described in Subsection (2) on or before June 30  
534 of each year.
- 535 (4) A council, as defined in Section 53G-7-1206, shall select a component of the approved  
536 success plan for the council's school to address within the council's School LAND Trust  
537 Program, in accordance with Section 53G-7-1206.

538 Section 10. Section **53G-10-801** is enacted to read:

539 **Part 8. Literacy Interventions**

540 **53G-10-801 (Effective 07/01/26). Definitions.**



As used in this part:

- (1) "Above typical academic progress" means a score for the progress metric on the benchmark reading assessment that demonstrates the rate of a student's progress toward achieving grade-level benchmarks that is higher than typical academic progress.
- (2) "Benchmark reading assessment" means the statewide benchmark assessment in reading described in Section 53E-4-307.
- (3) "Individualized reading plan" means a plan described in Section 53G-10-802 that defines the reading interventions a student will receive in given intervention settings to remediate a reading deficiency that the benchmark reading assessment identifies.
- (4)(a) "Intervention setting" means the setting in which a student receives a reading intervention.
  - (b) "Intervention setting" includes:
    - (i) a teacher leading an intervention during regular classroom work;
    - (ii) a paraprofessional leading an intervention;
    - (iii) an after-school or extended-day program;
    - (iv) a summer school program;
    - (v) an at-home activity; and
    - (vi) an online activity.
- (5) "Literacy team" means the following group of individuals who unite to establish and monitor the progress of an individualized reading plan for a student:
  - (a) the student's parents;
  - (b) at the discretion of the student's parents, the student;
  - (c) the student's teacher, including general and special education;
  - (d) for a student scoring well below benchmark on a benchmark reading assessment, a representative of the LEA who is knowledgeable about available literacy resources and who has the authority to commit literacy resources; and
  - (e) depending on the circumstances of the student and availability in the LEA, other educators or support personnel, including a therapist, counselor, social worker, translator, friend, or parent advocate.
- (6)(a) "Reading intervention" means an evidence-based instructional strategy, instructional methodology, technique, or resource that assists a student in becoming a successful reader, able to read at or above grade level, and ready for promotion to the next grade.
  - (b) "Reading intervention" includes:

- (i) dyad reading in which two individuals, typically a skilled reader and a developing reader, sit side-by-side and read the same text aloud together;
- (ii) decoding text in which an individual translates printed letters and words into speech through phonics;
- (iii) a targeted literacy skill intervention resource that is aligned with the science of reading;
- (iv) a word list;
- (v) picture mapping;
- (vi) phoneme and grapheme mapping;
- (vii) handwriting practice;
- (viii) reading protocols;
- (ix) retelling;
- (x) vocabulary practice;
- (xi) retention in the student's current grade level; and
- (xii) other strategies that are aligned with the science of reading to meet student needs in improving literacy.
- (7) "Reading on grade level" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53E-3-1001.
- (8) "Regional education service agency" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53G-4-410.
- (9) "Retention" means a reading intervention through which a student who does not meet a specific reading benchmark or satisfy a good cause exemption repeats the grade in the subsequent school year to provide the student with additional time and intensive, targeted reading intervention to remediate a learning deficiency before advancing to a grade for which the student is not prepared to succeed academically.
- (10) "Science of reading" means an interdisciplinary body of scientific evidence that:
- (a) informs how students learn to read and write proficiently;
- (b) explains why some students have difficulty with reading and writing;
- (c) indicates that all students benefit from explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing to become effective readers; and
- (d) does not rely on any model of teaching students to read based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues, including a three-cueing approach.
- (11) "Three-cueing" means a model of teaching students to read based on visual memory and contextual deduction as the primary basis for teaching word recognition rather than

609 more effective methods, including sounding out words or using a phonics-based  
610 approach.

611 Section 11. Section **53G-10-802** is enacted to read:

612 **53G-10-802 (Effective 07/01/26). Individualized reading plan.**

613 (1) For each student in kindergarten through grade 3 who scores below or well below grade  
614 level on a benchmark reading assessment, the LEA shall:

615 (a) provide to the student's parent, in writing or through the LEA's standard  
616 parent-communication portal:

617 (i) notification that the student has demonstrated a substantial deficiency in reading;

618 (ii) a description of the current services that the student receives;

619 (iii) a description of the process for establishing an individualized reading plan to  
620 identify reading interventions;

621 (iv) notification that retention, especially in earlier grades, can benefit the student's  
622 reading proficiency;

623 (v) notification that, if the student scores below benchmark on the benchmark reading  
624 assessment at the end of third grade, the student is subject to retention under  
625 Section 53G-10-803;

626 (vi) notification that the benchmark reading assessment is not the sole determinant of  
627 promotion and that additional evaluations and assessments are available to parents  
628 and the LEA to determine a student's reading proficiency and readiness for  
629 promotion to the next grade level; and

630 (vii) a statement that connects the child's proficiency in reading to long-term  
631 outcomes of success; and

632 (b) coordinate with the student's literacy team to establish an individualized reading plan  
633 for:

634 (i) a student in kindergarten who scores well below benchmark on the mid-year or  
635 end-of-year benchmark reading assessment;

636 (ii) a student in grade 1, 2, or 3 who scores below or well below benchmark on a  
637 benchmark reading assessment;

638 (iii) a student whom an LEA promotes to grade 4 in accordance with Subsection  
639 53G-10-803(2)(b)(ii) and has not scored at or above benchmark on a benchmark  
640 reading assessment during grade 4; and

641 (iv) a student in kindergarten or grade 4:

642 (A) who does not score at or above benchmark on a benchmark reading

- 643 assessment;
- 644 (B) who is not a student described in Subsection (1)(b)(i) or (1)(b)(iii); and
- 645 (C) whose parent requests that the student receive an individualized reading plan.
- 646 (2)(a) The literacy team for a student described in Subsection (1)(b) shall:
- 647 (i) within 45 days after the day on which the LEA provides the first notice described
- 648 in Subsection (1)(a) during a given school year, meet and jointly establish an
- 649 individualized reading plan for the student that includes:
- 650 (A) identification of the student's specific reading deficiencies;
- 651 (B) a description of the reading interventions and intervention settings the LEA
- 652 will provide to the student to remediate the identified reading deficiencies in
- 653 accordance with Section 53G-10-803;
- 654 (C) opportunities for the student's parent to be involved in the reading
- 655 interventions the individualized reading plan identifies;
- 656 (D) a process for monitoring and communicating to the student's parent the extent
- 657 to which the student receives the reading interventions; and
- 658 (E) a statement that if the student does not score at or above benchmark on the
- 659 benchmark assessment, the student is subject to retention under Section
- 660 53G-10-803;
- 661 (ii) meet at least once annually while the student has an individualized reading plan;
- 662 and
- 663 (iii) meet at the request of the parent to review the student's individualized reading
- 664 plan and progress.
- 665 (b) After every benchmark reading assessment, the literacy team shall communicate to
- 666 review and, if necessary, modify the student's individualized reading plan.
- 667 (3) An LEA shall continue the provision of reading interventions in accordance with a
- 668 student's individualized reading plan described in Subsection (2)(a) until:
- 669 (a) the student scores at or above benchmark on the benchmark reading assessment for
- 670 the student's current grade level; or
- 671 (b) the literacy team jointly modifies the student's literacy plan.
- 672 (4) A teacher of a student with an individualized reading plan shall review the student's plan
- 673 and literacy progress with the student and the student's parent during each parent teacher
- 674 conference.
- 675 (5) An LEA shall assign a student with an individualized reading plan under this section to
- 676 a teacher who has completed or is in the process of completing formal training in the

677 science of reading.

- 678 (6) Each school and each LEA shall retain a student's individualized reading plan as part of  
679 the student's permanent school record.

680 Section 12. Section **53G-10-803** is enacted to read:

681 **53G-10-803 (Effective 07/01/26). Scaled reading interventions.**

- 682 (1) In identifying reading interventions for a given student, the literacy team shall:

- 683 (a) ensure that identified reading interventions present the best approach for the student  
684 to improve literacy given the student's specific circumstances through:

685 (i) alignment with the science of reading;

686 (ii) research-based reading strategies for which evidence demonstrates success in  
687 improving reading among low-performing readers; and

688 (iii) targeting of the student's identified reading deficiencies;

- 689 (b) recommend a scaled intensity of reading interventions and intervention settings  
690 based on:

691 (i) the student's historical and current performance on the benchmark assessment  
692 relative to the benchmark for the student's grade level;

693 (ii) any reading interventions the student has received in a previous grade, including  
694 previous retention; and

695 (iii) the student's performance in numeracy and other foundational abilities; and

- 696 (c) consider including the following recommended reading interventions for a student in  
697 grades 1 through 3 who scores well below benchmark on the end-of-year benchmark  
698 reading assessment, in addition to in-school reading interventions:

699 (i) screening for dyslexia, including providing information to a parent regarding  
700 potential resources and options for screening; and

701 (ii) extended learning options, including after-school reading interventions and  
702 summer literacy programs.

- 703 (2)(a) An LEA shall consider retention and discuss the value of early retention with the  
704 student's parent for:

705 (i) a student in kindergarten who scores well below benchmark on the mid-year or  
706 end-of-year benchmark reading assessment;

707 (ii) a student in grade 1 who:

708 (A) scores well below benchmark on the end-of-year benchmark reading  
709 assessment; and

710 (B) has already had an individualized reading plan before the end-of-year

- 711 benchmark reading assessment and does not demonstrate above typical  
712 academic progress on the benchmark reading assessment;
- 713 (iii) a student in grade 2 who scores well below benchmark on the end-of-year  
714 benchmark reading assessment;
- 715 (A) began grade 2 below benchmark on the benchmark reading assessment; or  
716 (B) has already had an individualized reading plan before the end-of-year  
717 benchmark reading assessment and does not demonstrate above typical  
718 academic progress on the benchmark reading assessment; and
- 719 (iv) before the 2029-2030 academic year, a student in grade 3 who does not score at  
720 or above benchmark on the end-of-year benchmark reading assessment.
- 721 (b) Beginning with the end-of-year benchmark reading assessment in the 2029-2030  
722 academic year, for a student in grade 3 who does not score at or above benchmark on  
723 the end-of-year benchmark reading assessment, an LEA:
- 724 (i) except as provided in Subsection (2)(b)(ii), shall retain the student in grade 3; and  
725 (ii) may promote the student to grade 4 if one of the following good cause  
726 exemptions applies:
- 727 (A) the student scores below benchmark, but not well below benchmark, on the  
728 benchmark reading assessment and makes typical academic progress on the  
729 benchmark reading assessment;
- 730 (B) the school provides intensive reading interventions during the summer  
731 between grade 3 and grade 4, and the student improves to at benchmark or  
732 above benchmark on a benchmark reading assessment that the school  
733 administers during the summer;
- 734 (C) the student is an English learner with limited English proficiency and fewer  
735 than two years of instruction in an English language learner program;
- 736 (D) the student has an IEP or Section 504 accommodation plan that indicates that  
737 participation in the benchmark reading assessment is not appropriate;
- 738 (E) the student demonstrates an acceptable level of reading proficiency on an  
739 alternative standardized assessment that the LEA superintendent approves or  
740 by making above typical academic progress for multiple years on the  
741 benchmark reading assessment;
- 742 (F) the student demonstrates through a student portfolio that the student is  
743 performing at an equivalent standard of proficiency based on other measures  
744 that the individualized reading plan determines;

- (G) the student still demonstrates a reading deficiency after receiving intensive reading interventions for two or more years and after having been retained in any of kindergarten or grades 1 through 3; or
- (H) the student moved to a school for or during grade 3 and had not previously received an individualized reading plan or received intensive reading interventions previously.
- (c) An LEA shall provide a student described in Subsection (2)(b)(ii) intensive reading interventions during grade 4 through an individualized reading plan, which may include an extended instructional day.
- (3)(a) Except as provided in Subsection (3)(b), a student's literacy team shall make the determination of whether a good cause exemption described in Subsection (2)(b)(ii) applies.
- (b) If members of a student's literacy team disagree as to whether a good cause exemption described in Subsection (2)(b)(ii) applies, an individual whom the LEA's superintendent designates shall make the determination of whether a good cause exemption applies.
- (4)(a) An LEA shall:
- (i) establish a process for a parent to appeal the determination described in Subsection (3) regarding a student's retention or promotion under Subsection (2) if:
- (A) the determination process was erroneous; or
- (B) there is new evidence that is relevant to the determination; and
- (ii) designate an individual or a team within the LEA to review appeals under Subsection (4)(a)(i), including an individual who has received formal training in and has experience working in the science of reading.
- (b) The state board shall create a model process for the appeals described in Subsection (4)(a).

Section 13. Section **53G-10-804**, which is renumbered from Section 53E-3-1002 is renumbered and amended to read:

**[53E-3-1002] 53G-10-804 (Effective 07/01/26). Literacy coaching -- Professional learning.**

- (1) Subject to legislative appropriations, ~~[the state board shall]~~ each regional education service agency and each school district that is not within a regional education service agency shall:
- (a) provide, train, and assign literacy coaches [to schools with low literacy achievement

performance-]to provide early literacy coaching to teachers in kindergarten through grade 3, in accordance with this section[-] ;

(b) ensure the opportunity for formal professional learning in the science of reading for:

(i) teachers in kindergarten through grade 3; and

(ii) elementary school principals and vice principals;

(c) ensure that a literacy coach or teacher who has received formal professional learning

in the science of reading provides training in science of reading concepts to

paraprofessionals who work in kindergarten through grade 3 within the regional

education service agency or school district; and

(d) offer to include employees of charter schools within the relevant regional education

service agency or school district in the conceptual training described in Subsection

(1)(c).

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

~~[(a) establish criteria to determine which schools qualify for early literacy coaching, prioritizing coaching among:]~~

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

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

~~[(b)]~~ (a) establish minimum qualifications for early literacy coach positions to ensure adequate preparation with necessary expertise;

~~[(c)]~~ (b) define roles and responsibilities for a literacy coach, including:

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

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

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

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

(v) partnering with a school's leader to support school-wide literacy goals to provide a team of support for educators to embed the state-wide goals into instructional plans and practice;

(vi) delivering consistent and frequent job-embedded professional learning;



- 813 (vii) participating actively in professional learning experiences to deepen knowledge  
 814 and skills for coaching; and
- 815 (viii) designing and facilitating relevant and cohesive professional learning sessions  
 816 to strengthen the implementation of these evidence-based practices with  
 817 educators; and
- 818 ~~[(d)]~~ (c) establish parameters for the relationship between a literacy coach and school or [  
 819 LEA] school district, including ensuring that coaches do not engage in activities or  
 820 duties unrelated to literacy coaching, including:
- 821 (i) serving as an evaluator, substitute teacher, clerical aid, recess or lunch aid,  
 822 behavioral therapist, tester, guidance counselor, interventionist, program manager,  
 823 or contest leader; or
- 824 (ii) any other assignment that frequently disrupts the coach's ability to support  
 825 educators in improving instructional practice.
- 826 (3) ~~[The state board]~~ Each regional education service agency and each LEA that is not  
 827 within a regional education service agency shall[:]
- 828 ~~[(a)]~~ ensure that at least one staff position ~~[supervises]~~ supports early literacy~~[-coaches~~  
 829 ~~statewide;]~~ .
- 830 ~~[(b)]~~ select the pool of candidates for literacy coaching positions and coordinate with  
 831 LEAs regarding interviews, final selection, and placement; and]
- 832 ~~[(c)]~~ annually review coaching placements and adjust placements as necessary, based on  
 833 the school's literacy achievement performance and the criteria established under  
 834 Subsection (2).]
- 835 ~~[(4)]~~ The state board shall provide professional learning support in early literacy by:]
- 836 ~~[(a)]~~ facilitating professional learning opportunities to support literacy coaches statewide  
 837 that includes knowledge and skill development in adult learning practices,  
 838 job-embedded coaching, and family engagement;]
- 839 ~~[(b)]~~ providing professional learning regional consultants to:]
- 840 ~~[(i)]~~ support LEAs and regional education service agencies in designing, facilitating,  
 841 monitoring, and adjusting professional learning in early literacy that aligns with  
 842 the professional learning standards described in Section 53G-11-303; and]
- 843 ~~[(ii)]~~ serve a cohort of LEAs within a geographic region of the state; and]
- 844 ~~[(c)]~~ providing statewide professional learning to support the use of collective efficacy,  
 845 including the implementation of professional learning communities and school  
 846 leadership teams through 2027.]

Section 14. Section **53G-10-805** is enacted to read:

**53G-10-805 (Effective 07/01/26). Performance monitoring.**

(1) The entities described in Subsection (2) shall annually monitor:

(a) student performance within an LEA regarding the statewide goal described in Section 53E-3-1001 for third-grade reading; and

(b) elementary school performance regarding literacy instruction, science of reading training, and the provision of reading interventions described in this part.

(2) The following shall provide the monitoring described in Subsection (1):

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

(b) for a charter school, the charter school's authorizer; and

(c) for all public schools, the state board.

Section 15. Section **53G-10-806**, which is renumbered from Section 53G-10-306 is renumbered and amended to read:

**[53G-10-306] 53G-10-806 (Effective 07/01/26). Science of reading curriculum.**

(1) Each LEA shall adopt science of reading curriculum and intervention programs as advised by the science of reading panel described in Section 53E-3-1003 and in accordance with this part.

(2) An LEA may not include a three-cueing model in any curriculum or pedagogical practice except in relation to an individual student for whom an IEP or Section 504 accommodation plan explicitly indicates that the three-cueing approach is appropriate for the student's learning needs.

Section 16. Section **53G-11-507** is amended to read:

**53G-11-507 (Effective 07/01/26) (Repealed 07/01/29). Components of educator evaluation program.**

(1) A local school board in consultation with a joint committee established in Section 53G-11-506 shall adopt a reliable and valid educator and principal evaluation program that evaluates educators based on educator professional standards established by the state board and includes:

(a) a systematic annual evaluation of all provisional, probationary, and career educators;

(b) use of multiple lines of evidence, including:

(i) self-evaluation;

(ii) student and parent input;

(iii) for an administrator, employee input;

(iv) a reasonable number of supervisor observations to ensure adequate reliability;

(v) evidence of professional growth and other indicators of instructional improvement based on educator professional standards established by the state board;~~[-and]~~

(vi) for a teacher in kindergarten through grade 3, fluency in and implementation of the science of reading, as that term is defined in Section 53G-10-306;

(vii) for a principal of a school that includes kindergarten through grade 3, effective implementation of the science of reading, as that term is defined in Section 53G-10-306, within the school; and

~~[(v)]~~ (viii) student academic growth data, including, in kindergarten through grade 3, student performance and academic progress on the benchmark reading assessment described in Section 53E-4-307;

(c) a summative evaluation that differentiates among levels of performance; and

(d) for an administrator, the effectiveness of evaluating employee performance in a school or school district for which the administrator has responsibility.

(2)(a) An educator evaluation program described in Subsection (1) may include a reasonable number of peer observations.

(b) An educator evaluation program described in Subsection (1) may not use end-of-level assessment scores in educator evaluation.

**Section 17. Effective Date.**

This bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.