

HB 334: UT project-based civic learning bill

Sponsor: Rep. Dan Johnson (R)

Overview:

The civic mission of schools is to prepare students for knowledgeable, engaged citizenship. Utah fulfills much of this mission by providing quality civic knowledge to its students. It can take the next, necessary step by ensuring that its students can access standards-aligned, civic engagement projects which deepen understanding of how to participate in our democratic republic. A significant, growing research base indicates that K-12 civics education is most effective when it is content-focused, age-appropriate, and experiential.



Summary of HB 334:

HB 334 creates a three-year civic engagement pilot program to evaluate the benefits of, and methods for, implementing a civic engagement project requirement for high school graduation; it also encourages local innovation among districts, provides support for teacher training and professional development to facilitate content-focused, experiential civic learning. Local education agencies (LEA) are the eligible entities for the pilot program

If enacted, HB 334 would:

- Implement a three-year civic engagement pilot program
- Select participants LEAs from diverse geographic areas, with varying student population sizes
- Provide support for teacher training and professional development
- Require USB to report the pilot program's results to the Education Interim Committee
- Uphold the values of Utah's commitment to character and civic education

What's a civic engagement project?

Civic engagement projects are designed to improve students' civic knowledge, dispositions, and skills. They can be undertaken by individual students, a small cohort of learners, or classwide. Civic engagement projects, conventionally understood, can augment a student's capacity for: 1) understanding the complexity of public policy issues; 2) respectfully discussing alternate points of view, ; and 3) demonstrating comprehension of the connections between federal, state and local policies, inclusive of issue that affect a student' school or community. Students electing not to partake in a specific group or class-wide project would be offered the option of developing an individual project, subject to approval by the principal.

Questions?

- Contact the Utah Civics Coalition at utahcivicsbill@gmail.com