

HB399 FAQ

1 Workforce

Will HB399 hurt kids entering the workforce?

NO. There were no character education SEL programs dictating students' dispositions for them when most of us went to school, and we turned out just fine. We were free to match our characters to a career, not have jobs determine our characters for us.

It would be **DISCRIMINATION** to put these kids in **SUBJECTIVE** categories based on their beliefs or attitudes that future employers could use against them in hiring.

Employers are demanding subjective skills, won't this hurt the workforce?

NO. Employers have always wanted certain types of employees with skills, but a child doesn't deserve to have her character education pigeon-holed or planned for her because someone, somewhere, 10 years into the future, is going to want a certain type of employee.

Objective academics will better equip and prepare students to be self-sufficient and productive adults, in any type of employment they should be free to choose.

2 Civics

HB399 repeals the law that requires civics education to be integrated throughout the curriculum, will this hurt civics education in Utah?

NO. Civics isn't going anywhere, the education system can continue to teach civics as directed by state law, there are a number of laws that address civic education: 53E-4-204, 205, 205.2, etc. Right now there are even more excellent bills being run that objectively teach civics.

All civics should be focusing on objectively measurable metrics so they aren't assessing a child's subjective character traits.

3 Patriotic or traditional observances

Will this keep schools from having Christmas parties or observing patriotic holidays?

Of course not. If the schools aren't tracking or measuring how Christmassy or Patriotic kids are according to social-emotional frameworks and models, or implementing SEL systems around Christmas and Veterans' Day, we should be okay! Traditional observances don't fall under this bill.

4 Mental Health

Doesn't this bill stop mental health professionals in schools from doing their jobs?

NO. Clinical strategies like Talk therapy, CBT, DBT, etc. that are used with individual patients fall under HIPAA...this bill does not and cannot address those situations.

It goes without saying that mental health practitioners shouldn't be practicing psychology outside of a patient-doctor relationship, and the bill's provisions in sections 3 and 4 would still otherwise apply to all for administrative and personnel ... just because you're a mental health therapist doesn't make everyone your patient!

If children have mental health conditions to the extent that those are interfering with their academic performance, the parents should consider getting a 504 accommodation to address those.

5 Proper role of schools

State law said that schools should be teaching character. Is it necessary to change that now?

YES. When 53G-10-204 was first introduced, there were many legislators who expressed concern in the floor debates as to the slippery slope of having schools teach character. Their two main objections were:

1. The teaching of character belongs with the homes and churches.
2. If schools teach character values, whose values are they really going to teach?

Parents don't want or need to be in a tug-of-war with the schools over whose value system is better. Boundaries need to be restored so that schools stick to what can be objectively taught and measured.