53F-4-402 UPSTART program to develop school readiness skills of preschool children.

(1) UPSTART, a project that uses a home-based educational technology program to develop school readiness skills of preschool children, is established within the public education system.

(2) UPSTART is created to:
   (a) evaluate the effectiveness of giving preschool children access, at home, to interactive individualized instruction delivered by computers and the Internet to prepare them academically for success in school; and
   (b) test the feasibility of scaling a home-based curriculum in reading, math, and science delivered by computers and the Internet to all preschool children in Utah.

(3)
   (a) The State Board of Education shall contract with an educational technology provider, selected through a request for proposals process, for the delivery of a home-based educational technology program for preschool children that meets the requirements of Subsection (4).
   (b) The State Board of Education shall, on or before July 1, 2019, issue a request for proposals for two-year pilot proposals from one or more educational technology providers that do not have an existing contract under this part with the state for the delivery of a home-based educational technology program for preschool children that meets the requirements of Subsection (4).
      (i) After the two-year pilots described in Subsection (3)(b)(i), the State Board of Education may enter into a contract with one or more educational technology providers that have participated in a Utah pilot.
   (c) Every five years after July 1, 2021, the State Board of Education may issue a new request for proposals described in this section.

(4) A home-based educational technology program for preschool children shall meet the following standards:
   (a) the contractor shall provide computer-assisted instruction for preschool children on a home computer connected by the Internet to a centralized file storage facility;
   (b) the contractor shall:
      (i) provide technical support to families for the installation and operation of the instructional software; and
      (ii) provide for the installation of computer and Internet access in homes of low income families that cannot afford the equipment and service;
   (c) the contractor shall have the capability of doing the following through the Internet:
      (i) communicating with parents;
      (ii) updating the instructional software;
      (iii) validating user access;
      (iv) collecting usage data;
      (v) storing research data; and
      (vi) producing reports for parents, schools, and the Legislature;
   (d) the program shall include the following components:
      (i) computer-assisted, individualized instruction in reading, mathematics, and science;
      (ii) a multisensory reading tutoring program; and
      (iii) a validated computer adaptive reading test that does not require the presence of trained adults to administer and is an accurate indicator of reading readiness of children who cannot read;
(e) the contractor shall have the capability to quickly and efficiently modify, improve, and support the product;
(f) the contractor shall work in cooperation with school district personnel who will provide administrative and technical support of the program as provided in Section 53F-4-403;
(g) the contractor shall solicit families to participate in the program as provided in Section 53F-4-404; and
(h) in implementing the home-based educational technology program, the contractor shall seek the advise and expertise of early childhood education professionals within the Utah System of Higher Education on issues such as:
   (i) soliciting families to participate in the program;
   (ii) providing training to families; and
   (iii) motivating families to regularly use the instructional software.

(5)
(a) The contract shall provide funding for a home-based educational technology program for preschool children, subject to the appropriation of money by the Legislature for UPSTART.
(b) An appropriation for a request for proposals described in Subsection (3)(b)(i) shall be separate from an appropriation described in Subsection (5)(a).

(6) The State Board of Education shall evaluate a proposal based on:
(a) whether the home-based educational technology program meets the standards specified in Subsection (4);
(b) the results of an independent evaluation of the home-based educational technology program;
(c) the experience of the home-based educational technology program provider; and
(d) the per pupil cost of the home-based educational technology program.