

Senator John D. Johnson proposes the following substitute bill:

SCHOOL OF GENERAL EDUCATION ACT

2024 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: John D. Johnson

House Sponsor: _____

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill modifies higher education general education requirements by establishing an independent School of General Education within the University of Utah.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- ▶ defines terms;
- ▶ establishes the independent School of General Education within the University of Utah system;
- ▶ outlines the purpose, curriculum focus, responsibilities, and administration of the School of General Education;
- ▶ requires undergraduate students at the University of Utah to complete a 42-credit hour common core curriculum;
- ▶ exempts the core curriculum from administrative policies on course content; and
- ▶ assigns the University of Utah board of trustees reporting and implementation responsibilities.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:



26 This bill provides a special effective date.

27 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

28 AMENDS:

29 **53E-1-201**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapters 1, 328 and 380

30 ENACTS:

31 **53B-17-1501**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

32 **53B-17-1502**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

33 **53B-17-1503**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

34 **53B-17-1504**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

35 **53B-17-1505**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

36 **53B-17-1506**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

37 **53B-17-1507**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

38 **53B-17-1508**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

39 **53B-17-1509**, Utah Code Annotated 1953



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

42 Section 1. Section **53B-17-1501** is enacted to read:

43 **53B-17-1501. Definitions.**

44 (1) "Board of trustees" means the University of Utah board of trustees established
45 under Section **53B-2-103**.

46 (2) "Core curriculum" means the required undergraduate general education courses
47 established in Section **53B-17-1504** that students must complete to earn an associate or
48 bachelor's degree.

49 (3) "Dean" means the dean of the School of General Education, appointed under
50 Section **53B-17-1503**.

51 (4) "School of General Education" means the School of General Education unit created
52 within the University of Utah in Section **53B-17-1502** that is responsible for teaching most
53 general education courses.

54 (5) "Student" means an individual enrolled in an associate or bachelor's degree
55 program at the University of Utah.

56 Section 2. Section **53B-17-1502** is enacted to read:

57 **53B-17-1502. School of General Education -- Establishment.**

58 (1) There is established within the University of Utah the School of General Education
59 as an independent academic unit.

60 (2) The purposes of the School of General Education are to:

61 (a) educate students:

62 (i) through the books and major debates which form the intellectual foundations of free
63 countries, especially that of the United States;

64 (ii) through the principles, ideals, and institutions of law, liberty, and civic virtue that
65 underpin the American constitutional order;

66 (iii) on the foundations of public-spirited leadership and informed citizenship;

67 (iv) on the books, major debates, history, and culture that have shaped ways of life and
68 belief in western culture, especially the enduring culture of liberty;

69 (b) conduct teaching and research on the western tradition of liberal education, from
70 ancient Greece to current theory and practice in the United States of America and Europe; and

71 (c) focus on best extending the tradition of classic liberal education to current
72 undergraduate general education and secondary and continuing education.

73 Section 3. Section **53B-17-1503** is enacted to read:

74 **53B-17-1503. School of General Education -- Duties and authority.**

75 (1) The School of General Education shall:

76 (a) establish bylaws consistent with the purposes stated in Section [53B-17-1502](#);

77 (b) offer instruction in topics aligned with the stated purposes, including:

78 (i) core curriculum general education courses designated to the school;

79 (ii) foundational texts and debates that have shaped western political and intellectual
80 traditions;

81 (iii) the theory and practice of liberal arts education; and

82 (iv) extension of liberal education to secondary and continuing education.

83 (2) The School of General Education has authority to:

84 (a) offer courses;

85 (b) develop programs leading to certificates, minors, majors, and graduate degrees;

86 (c) offer undergraduate and graduate degrees;

87 (d) appoint:

- 88 (i) tenure track faculty;
- 89 (ii) lecturers; and
- 90 (iii) adjunct faculty; and
- 91 (e) offer teaching positions to graduate students.

92 Section 4. Section **53B-17-1504** is enacted to read:

93 **53B-17-1504. Appointment of dean -- Authority of dean -- Duties.**

- 94 (1) (a) Before June 1, 2025, and subject to approval by the board of trustees, the
- 95 university president will hire the dean.
- 96 (b) The university president is solely responsible for the hiring of the dean.
- 97 (2) The dean reports directly to the university president.
- 98 (3) The dean has authority to:
- 99 (a) manage the recruitment and hiring process for School of General Education faculty
- 100 and staff;
- 101 (b) extend employment offers, subject to approval by the university president and the
- 102 board of trustees;
- 103 (c) approve voluntary joint faculty appointments from other university departments for
- 104 a term of up to three years, renewable at the discretion of the dean;
- 105 (d) oversee and approve the School of General Education's curriculum developed by
- 106 the faculty; and
- 107 (e) ensure general education courses taught by the School of General Education faculty
- 108 are consistent with this chapter.
- 109 (4) Subject to approval by the board of trustees, each academic year the dean shall
- 110 propose the number of positions for:
- 111 (a) tenure-track faculty;
- 112 (b) lecturers;
- 113 (c) adjunct faculty; and
- 114 (d) graduate assistants.

115 Section 5. Section **53B-17-1505** is enacted to read:

116 **53B-17-1505. Faculty.**

- 117 (1) Faculty appointed to the School of General Education may, but are not required to,
- 118 hold joint appointments within other university departments.

119 (2) University of Utah faculty outside the School of General Education may not:
120 (a) block faculty hires or appointments into the School of General Education; or
121 (b) block the granting of tenure, promotion, or other conditions of employment for
122 School of General Education faculty.

123 (3) Only faculty with appointments in the School of General Education may teach
124 general education courses outside the areas of science, mathematics, economics, or foreign
125 language.

126 Section 6. Section **53B-17-1506** is enacted to read:

127 **53B-17-1506. Core curriculum -- General education requirements.**

128 (1) To earn an associate or bachelor's degree from the University of Utah, students
129 shall complete a 42-credit hour core curriculum, including:

130 (a) a three semester credit hour course in rhetoric and English composition that
131 includes:

132 (i) grammar;

133 (ii) logic;

134 (iii) rhetoric; and

135 (iv) substantial readings from classic works from a variety of eras devoted to rhetoric
136 and composition;

137 (b) a three semester credit hour mathematics course, which may only be one of the
138 following:

139 (i) precalculus;

140 (ii) mathematical logic;

141 (iii) probability;

142 (iv) introduction to statistics; or

143 (v) calculus;

144 (c) a four semester credit hour laboratory science course, which may only be one of the
145 following:

146 (i) introduction to biology;

147 (ii) introduction to chemistry; or

148 (iii) introduction to physics;

149 (d) a three semester credit hour course in Western history covering the time period

150 from 3000 B.C. to 1450 that includes a broad survey with concentration on:

151 (i) Athens and the Greek polis to 404 B.C.;

152 (ii) the Roman Republic and Empire;

153 (iii) the rise of Christianity;

154 (iv) medieval Western Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries; and

155 (v) medieval English legal and constitutional history;

156 (e) a three semester credit hour course in Western history covering the time period

157 from 1450 to 2000 that includes a broad survey with concentration on:

158 (i) the Renaissance;

159 (ii) the Reformation;

160 (iii) the development of parliamentary democracy in Britain;

161 (iv) the French Revolution;

162 (v) the Industrial Revolution in Britain;

163 (vi) Western science; and

164 (vii) the rise and fall of the Soviet state and Nazi Germany in the 20th century;

165 (f) a three semester credit hour course in United States history covering the time period

166 from 1607 to 1877 that includes a broad survey exploring:

167 (i) the development of the United States of America's republican form of government

168 from the colonial period through 1877;

169 (ii) issues of politics, economics, technological progress, war, and foreign policy; and

170 (iii) a comparison between the progress of democratic representation in the United

171 States and the rest of the world;

172 (g) a three semester credit hour course in United States government that explores:

173 (i) founding principles of natural rights, liberty, equality, representative democracy,

174 separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, and constitutional self-government; and

175 (ii) how those principles have played out over the United States' history, chiefly

176 through the study of original source documents that established and explained the United

177 States' independence and the United States Constitution, and later documents that illustrate the

178 United States' constitutional history and structure;

179 (h) a three semester credit hour course in United States literature covering 1607

180 through 1914 that includes substantial selections from works considered to be of first-rank

181 literary quality and of enduring literary influence;
182 (i) a three semester credit hour introduction to economics course that includes
183 instruction on:
184 (i) supply and demand;
185 (ii) market competition;
186 (iii) economic growth;
187 (iv) trade;
188 (v) taxation;
189 (vi) externalities; and
190 (vii) public goods;
191 (j) a three semester credit hour course, which may be one of the following:
192 (i) a course on founding ideas of Western liberty that includes substantial selections
193 from 17th through 19th century works on:
194 (A) political, religious, and economic liberty;
195 (B) common law;
196 (C) the nature of republican government; and
197 (D) the American fusion of liberty, republican government, civic virtue, and
198 democracy;
199 (ii) a course on founding traditions of Western art that explores the history of Western
200 fine arts from ancient Greece to the 20th century and exposes students to the study of
201 exemplary masterpieces of Western fine arts in genres including music, painting, sculpture, and
202 architecture; or
203 (iii) a course on founding ideas of Western economics that explores 18th through 20th
204 century influential works of economic theory;
205 (k) a four semester credit hour course in Western humanities covering 1000 B.C.
206 through 1450 that includes:
207 (i) substantial selections from works considered to be of first-rank literary quality and
208 of enduring literary and philosophical influence;
209 (ii) readings from the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, Homeric epic, Greek
210 philosophy, Greek tragedy, and medieval literature; and
211 (iii) a one semester credit hour component of English composition that aims to instruct

212 students to produce correct and lucid academic writing on the works taught in the course;
213 (l) a four semester credit hour course in Western humanities covering 1450 through
214 1950 that includes:
215 (i) substantial selections from works considered to be of first-rank literary quality and
216 of enduring literary and philosophical influence;
217 (ii) readings of Catholic and Protestant religious literature, drama, essays, poetry, and
218 novels;
219 (iii) approximately equal coverage of each of the five centuries between 1450 and
220 1950; and
221 (iv) a one semester credit hour component of English composition that aims to instruct
222 students to produce correct and lucid academic writing on the works taught in the course; and
223 (m) a three semester credit hour world civilizations course that:
224 (i) is a broad survey covering the distinctive history, culture, literature, and social
225 structure of at least four nations or culture areas outside the United States, to be selected from
226 among:
227 (A) China;
228 (B) India;
229 (C) the Middle East;
230 (D) Africa;
231 (E) Latin America;
232 (F) Russia;
233 (G) Japan; and
234 (H) Southeast Asia; and
235 (ii) permits concentration on a representative country or countries if a given culture
236 area is under consideration.
237 (2) As appropriate, humanities and social science general education courses shall
238 highlight the theme of Western liberty and republican self-government, including:
239 (a) historical sources;
240 (b) strengths and weaknesses;
241 (c) 20th century challenges from communism and fascism;
242 (d) contrasts with non-Western systems of government;

243 (e) distinctive features in the United States; and

244 (f) spread beyond the West.

245 (3) The required core curriculum outlined in Subsection (1) is the only general
246 education requirement for associate and bachelor's degrees, except that:

247 (a) the board of trustees may additionally require three to six foreign language credits
248 for bachelor's degree students;

249 (b) more advanced alternatives may be approved to satisfy the laboratory science
250 requirement for bachelor of science degrees; and

251 (c) students seeking to obtain bachelors of science degrees may choose to be exempted
252 from the following course requirements:

253 (i) the course described in Subsection [53B-17-506\(1\)\(l\)](#); and

254 (ii) the courses described in Subsection [53B-17-506\(1\)\(j\)](#).

255 (4) Core curriculum courses shall not include, require, or award credit for student
256 participation in civic advocacy, lobbying, or public policy activism.

257 (5) (a) As directed by the dean, the School of General Education shall develop
258 consistent learning outcomes for the core curriculum.

259 (b) The learning outcomes developed under Subsection (5)(a) are exempted from
260 external University of Utah administrative policies that affect course content.

261 (6) The School of General Education dean may approve satisfaction of core curriculum
262 requirements using early college credit options.

263 Section 7. Section **53B-17-1507** is enacted to read:

264 **53B-17-1507. Transition of general education instruction and faculty.**

265 (1) Beginning May 1, 2026, freshmen entering into the University of Utah shall be
266 responsible for completing the following general education courses before graduation:

267 (a) the mathematics course described in Subsection [53B-17-506\(1\)\(b\)](#);

268 (b) the laboratory science course described in Subsection [53B-17-506\(1\)\(c\)](#);

269 (c) the history courses described in Subsections [53B-17-506\(1\)\(d\)](#), (e), and (f);

270 (d) the economics course described in Subsection [53B-17-506\(1\)\(i\)](#); and

271 (e) the humanities courses described in Subsections [53B-17-506\(1\)\(k\)](#) and (l).

272 (2) The School of General Education faculty shall teach the courses described in
273 Subsection (1), except for science, mathematics, and economics courses.

- 274 (3) Beginning May 1, 2027:
275 (a) freshmen entering into the University of Utah shall be responsible for completing
276 all general education requirements imposed under this chapter before graduation; and
277 (b) the School of General Education faculty shall begin teaching all general education
278 courses for which the School of General Education is responsible under this chapter.
279 (4) As the size of the School of General Education faculty increases, the board of
280 trustees shall correspondingly reduce faculty in departments outside of the School of General
281 Education as necessary through:
282 (a) program discontinuance; or
283 (b) substantial curtailment.
284 (5) The board of trustees may discharge a faculty member and eliminate the position
285 when the trustees consider the discharge necessary due to program changes under this chapter.
286 (6) Discharge decisions under Subsection (5) are the sole responsibility of the trustees
287 and are not subject to faculty review.

288 Section 8. Section **53B-17-1508** is enacted to read:

289 **53B-17-1508. Oversight and reporting requirements.**

- 290 (1) The board of trustees shall report to the Education Interim Committee by
291 November 30, 2025, and once every two years after on:
292 (a) progress in aligning with the intent for general education reform described in this
293 part; and
294 (b) factors affecting long-term sustainability of the School of General Education.
295 (2) The board of trustees shall coordinate with academic units outside the School of
296 General Education to align staffing and program offerings with the teaching obligations and
297 offerings of the school.
298 (3) (a) The dean shall submit an annual report to the Education Interim Committee by
299 November 30 of each year.
300 (b) The report described in Subsection (3)(a) shall provide a full account of the school's
301 budget, achievements, opportunities, challenges, and obstacles faced in the development of the
302 school.

303 Section 9. Section **53B-17-1509** is enacted to read:

304 **53B-17-1509. Severability.**

305 (1) If any provision of this part, or the application of any provision to any person or
306 circumstance, is held invalid, the remainder of this part is given effect without the invalid
307 provision or application.

308 (2) The provisions of this part are severable.

309 Section 10. Section **53E-1-201** is amended to read:

310 **53E-1-201. Reports to and action required of the Education Interim Committee.**

311 (1) In accordance with applicable provisions and Section **68-3-14**, the following
312 recurring reports are due to the Education Interim Committee:

313 (a) the report described in Section **9-22-109** by the STEM Action Center Board,
314 including the information described in Section **9-22-113** on the status of the computer science
315 initiative and Section **9-22-114** on the Computing Partnerships Grants Program;

316 (b) the prioritized list of data research described in Section **53B-33-302** and the report
317 on research and activities described in Section **53B-33-304** by the Utah Data Research Center;

318 (c) the report described in Section **35A-15-303** by the State Board of Education on
319 preschool programs;

320 (d) the report described in Section **53B-1-402** by the Utah Board of Higher Education
321 on career and technical education issues and addressing workforce needs;

322 (e) the annual report of the Utah Board of Higher Education described in Section
323 **53B-1-402**;

324 (f) the reports described in Section **53B-28-401** by the Utah Board of Higher Education
325 regarding activities related to campus safety;

326 (g) the State Superintendent's Annual Report by the state board described in Section
327 **53E-1-203**;

328 (h) the annual report described in Section **53E-2-202** by the state board on the strategic
329 plan to improve student outcomes;

330 (i) the report described in Section **53E-8-204** by the state board on the Utah Schools for
331 the Deaf and the Blind;

332 (j) the report described in Section **53E-10-703** by the Utah Leading through Effective,
333 Actionable, and Dynamic Education director on research and other activities;

334 (k) the report described in Section **53F-2-522** regarding mental health screening
335 programs;

336 (l) the report described in Section 53F-4-203 by the state board and the independent
337 evaluator on an evaluation of early interactive reading software;

338 (m) the report described in Section 63N-20-107 by the Governor's Office of Economic
339 Opportunity on UPSTART;

340 (n) the reports described in Sections 53F-5-214 and 53F-5-215 by the state board
341 related to grants for professional learning and grants for an elementary teacher preparation
342 assessment;

343 (o) upon request, the report described in Section 53F-5-219 by the state board on the
344 Local Innovations Civics Education Pilot Program;

345 (p) the report described in Section 53F-5-405 by the State Board of Education
346 regarding an evaluation of a partnership that receives a grant to improve educational outcomes
347 for students who are low income;

348 (q) the report described in Section 53B-35-202 regarding the Higher Education and
349 Corrections Council;

350 (r) the report described in Section 53G-7-221 by the State Board of Education
351 regarding innovation plans;

352 (s) the annual report described in Section 63A-2-502 by the Educational Interpretation
353 and Translation Service Procurement Advisory Council; ~~and~~

354 (t) the reports described in Section 53F-6-412 regarding the Utah Fits All Scholarship
355 Program[-]; and

356 (u) the reports described in Section 53B-17-1508 regarding the School of General
357 Education.

358 (2) In accordance with applicable provisions and Section 68-3-14, the following
359 occasional reports are due to the Education Interim Committee:

360 (a) the report described in Section 35A-15-303 by the School Readiness Board by
361 November 30, 2020, on benchmarks for certain preschool programs;

362 (b) the report described in Section 53B-28-402 by the Utah Board of Higher Education
363 on or before the Education Interim Committee's November 2021 meeting;

364 (c) if required, the report described in Section 53E-4-309 by the state board explaining
365 the reasons for changing the grade level specification for the administration of specific
366 assessments;

367 (d) if required, the report described in Section 53E-5-210 by the state board of an
368 adjustment to the minimum level that demonstrates proficiency for each statewide assessment;

369 (e) in 2022 and in 2023, on or before November 30, the report described in Subsection
370 53E-10-309(5) related to the PRIME pilot program;

371 (f) the report described in Section 53E-10-702 by Utah Leading through Effective,
372 Actionable, and Dynamic Education;

373 (g) if required, the report described in Section 53F-2-513 by the state board evaluating
374 the effects of salary bonuses on the recruitment and retention of effective teachers in high
375 poverty schools;

376 (h) the report described in Section 53F-5-210 by the state board on the Educational
377 Improvement Opportunities Outside of the Regular School Day Grant Program;

378 (i) upon request, a report described in Section 53G-7-222 by an LEA regarding
379 expenditure of a percentage of state restricted funds to support an innovative education
380 program;

381 (j) the report described in Section 53G-7-503 by the state board regarding fees that
382 LEAs charge during the 2020-2021 school year;

383 (k) the reports described in Section 53G-11-304 by the state board regarding proposed
384 rules and results related to educator exit surveys; and

385 (l) the report described in Section 26B-5-113 by the Office of Substance Use and
386 Mental Health, the State Board of Education, and the Department of Health and Human
387 Service regarding recommendations related to Medicaid reimbursement for school-based health
388 services.

389 Section 11. **Effective date.**

390 This bill takes effect on July 1, 2024.