

**Civics Education Modifications**

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Ken Ivory**

Senate Sponsor:

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

This bill establishes requirements for instruction on foundational United States civics documents.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

- requires the State Board of Education to establish core standards for spiral instruction on foundational United States civics documents in kindergarten through grade 12;
- defines the foundational documents subject to spiral instruction requirements;
- establishes requirements for instruction that increases in complexity each year;
- directs local education agencies to implement curriculum aligned with spiral instruction standards; and
- makes technical and conforming changes.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

AMENDS:

**53E-4-202 (Effective 05/06/26) (Partially Repealed 01/01/28)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Third Special Session, Chapter 5

ENACTS:

**53G-10-308 (Effective 05/06/26)**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

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

Section 1. Section **53E-4-202** is amended to read:

**53E-4-202 (Effective 05/06/26) (Partially Repealed 01/01/28). Core standards for Utah public schools -- Notice and hearing requirements.**

- 31 (1)(a) In establishing minimum standards related to curriculum and instruction  
32 requirements under Section 53E-3-501, the state board shall, in consultation with  
33 local school boards, school superintendents, teachers, employers, and parents  
34 implement core standards for Utah public schools that will enable students to, among  
35 other objectives:
- 36 (i) communicate effectively, both verbally and through written communication;
  - 37 (ii) apply mathematics; [~~and~~]
  - 38 (iii) access, analyze, and apply information[-] ; and
  - 39 (iv) demonstrate knowledge of foundational United States civics documents as  
40 described in Section 53E-10-308.
- 41 (b) Except as provided in this public education code, the state board may recommend  
42 but may not require a local school board or charter school governing board to use:
- 43 (i) a particular curriculum or instructional material; or
  - 44 (ii) a model curriculum or instructional material.
- 45 (2) The state board shall, in establishing the core standards for Utah public schools:
- 46 (a) identify the basic knowledge, skills, and competencies each student is expected to  
47 acquire or master as the student advances through the public education system; and
  - 48 (b) align with each other the core standards for Utah public schools and the assessments  
49 described in Section 53E-4-303.
- 50 (3) The basic knowledge, skills, and competencies identified pursuant to Subsection (2)(a)  
51 shall increase in depth and complexity from year to year and focus on consistent and  
52 continual progress within and between grade levels and courses in the basic academic  
53 areas of:
- 54 (a) English, including explicit phonics, spelling, grammar, reading, writing, vocabulary,  
55 speech, and listening; [~~and~~]
  - 56 (b) mathematics, including basic computational skills[-] ; and
  - 57 (c) social studies, including instruction on foundational United States civics documents  
58 as described in Section 53E-10-308.
- 59 (4) Before adopting core standards for Utah public schools, the state board shall:
- 60 (a) publicize draft core standards for Utah public schools for the state, as a class A  
61 notice under Section 63G-30-102, for at least 90 days;
  - 62 (b) invite public comment on the draft core standards for Utah public schools for a  
63 period of not less than 90 days; and
  - 64 (c) conduct three public hearings that are held in different regions of the state on the

- 65 draft core standards for Utah public schools.
- 66 (5) LEA governing boards shall design their school programs, that are supported by  
67 generally accepted scientific standards of evidence, to focus on the core standards for  
68 Utah public schools with the expectation that each program will enhance or help achieve  
69 mastery of the core standards for Utah public schools.
- 70 (6) Except as provided in Sections 53G-10-103 and 53G-10-402, each school may select  
71 instructional materials and methods of teaching, that are supported by generally accepted  
72 scientific standards of evidence, that the school considers most appropriate to meet the  
73 core standards for Utah public schools.
- 74 (7) The state may exit any agreement, contract, memorandum of understanding, or  
75 consortium that cedes control of the core standards for Utah public schools to any other  
76 entity, including a federal agency or consortium, for any reason, including:
- 77 (a) the cost of developing or implementing the core standards for Utah public schools;  
78 (b) the proposed core standards for Utah public schools are inconsistent with community  
79 values; or
- 80 (c) the agreement, contract, memorandum of understanding, or consortium:
- 81 (i) was entered into in violation of Chapter 3, Part 8, Implementing Federal or  
82 National Education Programs, or Title 63J, Chapter 5, Federal Funds Procedures  
83 Act;
- 84 (ii) conflicts with Utah law;
- 85 (iii) requires Utah student data to be included in a national or multi-state database;
- 86 (iv) requires records of teacher performance to be included in a national or multi-state  
87 database; or
- 88 (v) imposes curriculum, assessment, or data tracking requirements on home school or  
89 private school students.
- 90 (8) The state board shall:
- 91 (a) submit a report in accordance with Section 53E-1-203 on the development and  
92 implementation of the core standards for Utah public schools, including the time line  
93 established for the review of the core standards for Utah public schools; and
- 94 (b) ensure that the report described in Subsection (8)(a) includes the time line  
95 established for the review of the core standards for Utah public schools by a  
96 standards review committee and the recommendations of a standards review  
97 committee established under Section 53E-4-203.
- 98 Section 2. Section **53G-10-308** is enacted to read:

99           **53G-10-308 (Effective 05/06/26). Spiral instruction on foundational United**  
100 **States civics documents.**

101 (1) As used in this section:

102 (a) "Foundational document" means:

103 (i) the Declaration of Independence;

104 (ii) the Articles of Confederation;

105 (iii) the United States Constitution;

106 (iv) the Bill of Rights;

107 (v) George Washington's Farewell Address; and

108 (vi) selected passages from The Federalist Papers.

109 (b) "Spiral instruction" means instruction in which a foundational document is presented  
110 to students multiple times throughout the student's education from kindergarten  
111 through grade 12, with the content, concepts, and analysis of each foundational  
112 document increasing in depth and complexity as the student advances from grade to  
113 grade.

114 (2) Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, the state board shall establish core standards  
115 that require spiral instruction on the foundational documents for students in kindergarten  
116 through grade 12.

117 (3) The state board shall ensure that the core standards for spiral instruction on the  
118 foundational documents:

119 (a) require instruction on each foundational document in each grade from kindergarten  
120 through grade 12;

121 (b) establish learning outcomes that increase in depth and complexity as students  
122 advance from grade to grade;

123 (c) specify that instruction shall focus on:

124 (i) reading and analyzing the text of each foundational document;

125 (ii) understanding the historical context in which each foundational document was  
126 created;

127 (iii) identifying the principles contained in each foundational document;

128 (iv) analyzing the relationship between the foundational documents; and

129 (v) applying the principles of the foundational documents to current events and civic  
130 participation;

131 (d) align instruction with the developmental capabilities of students at each grade level;

132 (e) ensure that students in each grade level build upon knowledge and skills acquired in

- 133            previous grades; and
- 134            (f) integrate instruction on the foundational documents with existing social studies core
- 135            standards.
- 136            (4)(a) An LEA shall implement curriculum and instructional materials that align with the
- 137            core standards for spiral instruction on the foundational documents established under
- 138            this section.
- 139            (b) An LEA shall ensure that curriculum and instructional materials selected under
- 140            Subsection (4)(a):
- 141            (i) provide for instruction on each foundational document in each grade from
- 142            kindergarten through grade 12;
- 143            (ii) increase in complexity and analytical depth as students progress through grades;
- 144            (iii) include primary source text from each foundational document; and
- 145            (iv) support students in developing skills in reading, analyzing, and applying the
- 146            principles contained in the foundational documents.
- 147            (5) The state board shall, in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative
- 148            Rulemaking Act, make rules establishing:
- 149            (a) the minimum amount of instructional time dedicated to spiral instruction on the
- 150            foundational documents at each grade level;
- 151            (b) assessment methods to measure student knowledge and understanding of the
- 152            foundational documents at each grade level; and
- 153            (c) reporting requirements for an LEA to demonstrate compliance with this section.
- 154            (6) Nothing in this section prohibits an LEA from exceeding the minimum standards
- 155            established by the state board under this section.

156            **Section 3. Effective Date.**

157            This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.