

John D. Johnson proposes the following substitute bill:

Public Education Revisions

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: John D. Johnson

House Sponsor: R. Neil Walter

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill amends provisions and programs regarding the operation of the public education system.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- defines terms, including "general control and supervision" of the public education system;
- corrects references regarding the State Superintendent's Annual Report;
- allows the State Board of Education (state board) to authorize the state superintendent of public instruction to appoint and supervise the superintendent of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (USDB);
- renames the Catalyst Center Grant Program to the Applied Educational Experience Grant Program and amends associated provisions regarding eligibility for and use of program funds;
- amends the allowable use of funds in the Grow Your Own Educator Pipeline Program for paraprofessionals;
- aligns terminology regarding juvenile justice reintegration to apply to all local education agencies rather than only school districts;
- amends provisions to allow the USDB to coordinate with the state security chief rather than the county security chief of the county for each USDB campus;
- allows the state board to reduce suicide prevention grant amounts in certain circumstances; and
- makes technical and conforming changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

29 None

30 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

31 AMENDS:

32 **53E-1-102**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 343

33 **53E-1-203**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapters 298, 327

34 **53E-8-204**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 509

35 **53E-10-310**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, First Special Session, Chapter 9

36 **53F-5-218**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapters 136, 342

37 **53F-9-204**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapters 413, 433

38 **53G-8-213**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 348

39 **53G-8-701.5**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 388

40 **53G-8-701.6**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapters 388, 470

41 **53G-8-701.8**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, First Special Session, Chapter 11

42 **53G-9-702**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapters 98, 328

43 RENUMBERS AND AMENDS:

44 **53F-5-224**, (Renumbered from 53E-3-507.1, as last amended by Laws of Utah
45 2025, First Special Session, Chapter 9)

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

48 Section 1. Section **53E-1-102** is amended to read:

49 **53E-1-102 . Public education code definitions.**

50 Unless otherwise indicated, as used in this title, Title 53F, Public Education System --

51 Funding, and Title 53G, Public Education System -- Local Administration:

52 (1) "Bullying" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53G-9-601.

53 (2) "Charter agreement" means an agreement made in accordance with Section 53G-5-303
54 that authorizes the operation of a charter school.

55 (3) "Charter school governing board" means the board that governs a charter school.

56 (4) "District school" means a public school under the control of a local school board.

57 (5) "General control and supervision" means, including as used in Utah Constitution,

58 Article X, Section 3, that the state board shall direct and manage all aspects of the public
59 education system in accordance with laws the Legislature makes, including in relation to
60 compliance and monitoring of an LEA under Section 53E-3-401.

61 [(5)] (6) "Individualized education program" or "IEP" means a written statement for a

62 student with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with the

63 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1400 et seq.

64 [(6)] (7) "LEA governing board" means:

- 65 (a) for a school district, the local school board;
- 66 (b) for a charter school, the charter school governing board; or
- 67 (c) for the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, the state board.

68 [(7)] (8) "Local education agency" or "LEA" means:

- 69 (a) a school district;
- 70 (b) a charter school; or
- 71 (c) the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.

72 [(8)] (9) "Local school board" means a board elected under Title 20A, Chapter 14, Part 2,
73 Election of Members of Local Boards of Education.

74 [(9)] (10) "Minimum School Program" means the same as that term is defined in Section
75 53F-2-102.

76 [(10)] (11) "Parent" means a parent or legal guardian.

77 [(11)] (12) "Public education code" means:

- 78 (a) this title;
- 79 (b) Title 53F, Public Education System -- Funding; and
- 80 (c) Title 53G, Public Education System -- Local Administration.

81 [(12)] (13) "Section 504 accommodation plan" means a plan developed in accordance with
82 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. Sec. 701 et seq., for a student
83 with a disability, to meet the student's educational needs and ensure equitable access to a
84 free appropriate public education.

85 [(13)] (14) "School nurse" means a registered nurse:

- 86 (a) who holds:
 - 87 (i) a license under Title 58, Chapter 31b, Nurse Practice Act; or
 - 88 (ii) a multistate license as that term is defined in Section 58-31e-102; and
- 89 (b) whose primary role is the care of a defined group of students enrolled in the public
90 school system.

91 [(14)] (15) "State board" means the State Board of Education.

92 [(15)] (16) "State superintendent" means the state superintendent of public instruction
93 appointed under Section 53E-3-301.

94 Section 2. Section **53E-1-203** is amended to read:

95 **53E-1-203 . State Superintendent's Annual Report.**

96 (1) The state board shall prepare and submit to the governor, the Education Interim

- 97 Committee, and the Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee, by January 15 of
98 each year, an annual written report known as the State Superintendent's Annual Report
99 that includes:
- 100 (a) the operations, activities, programs, and services of the state board;
 - 101 (b) subject to Subsection (4)(b), all reports listed in Subsection (4)(a); and
 - 102 (c) data on the general condition of the schools with recommendations considered
103 desirable for specific programs, including:
 - 104 (i) a complete statement of fund balances;
 - 105 (ii) a complete statement of revenues by fund and source;
 - 106 (iii) a complete statement of adjusted expenditures by fund, the status of bonded
107 indebtedness, the cost of new school plants, and school levies;
 - 108 (iv) a complete statement of state funds allocated to each school district and charter
109 school by source, including supplemental appropriations, and a complete
110 statement of expenditures by each school district and charter school, including
111 supplemental appropriations, by function and object as outlined in the United
112 States Department of Education publication "Financial Accounting for Local and
113 State School Systems";
 - 114 (v) a statement that includes data on:
 - 115 (A) fall enrollments;
 - 116 (B) average membership;
 - 117 (C) high school graduates;
 - 118 (D) all employees, including data reported by school districts on educator ratings
119 described in Section 53G-11-511;
 - 120 (E) pupil-teacher ratios;
 - 121 (F) average class sizes;
 - 122 (G) average salaries;
 - 123 (H) applicable private school data; and
 - 124 (I) data from statewide assessments described in Section 53E-4-301 for each
125 school and school district;
 - 126 (vi) statistical information for each school district and charter school regarding:
 - 127 (A) student attendance by grade level;
 - 128 (B) the percentage of students chronically absent;
 - 129 (C) the percentage of student excused absences; and
 - 130 (D) the percentage of student unexcused absences;

- 131 (vii) statistical information regarding incidents of delinquent activity in the schools,
132 at school-related activities, on school buses, and at school bus stops; and
- 133 (viii) other statistical and financial information about the school system that the state
134 superintendent considers pertinent.
- 135 (2)(a) For the purposes of Subsection (1)(c)(v):
- 136 (i) the pupil-teacher ratio for a school shall be calculated by dividing the number of
137 students enrolled in a school by the number of full-time equivalent teachers
138 assigned to the school, including regular classroom teachers, school-based
139 specialists, and special education teachers;
- 140 (ii) the pupil-teacher ratio for a school district shall be the median pupil-teacher ratio
141 of the schools within a school district;
- 142 (iii) the pupil-teacher ratio for charter schools aggregated shall be the median
143 pupil-teacher ratio of charter schools in the state; and
- 144 (iv) the pupil-teacher ratio for the state's public schools aggregated shall be the
145 median pupil-teacher ratio of public schools in the state.
- 146 (b) The report shall:
- 147 (i) include the pupil-teacher ratio for:
- 148 (A) each school district;
- 149 (B) the charter schools aggregated; and
- 150 (C) the state's public schools aggregated; and
- 151 (ii) identify a website where pupil-teacher ratios for each school in the state may be
152 accessed.
- 153 (3) For each operation, activity, program, or service provided by the state board, the annual
154 report shall include:
- 155 (a) a description of the operation, activity, program, or service;
- 156 (b) data and metrics:
- 157 (i) selected and used by the state board to measure progress, performance,
158 effectiveness, and scope of the operation, activity, program, or service, including
159 summary data; and
- 160 (ii) that are consistent and comparable for each state operation, activity, program, or
161 service;
- 162 (c) budget data, including the amount and source of funding, expenses, and allocation of
163 full-time employees for the operation, activity, program, or service;
- 164 (d) historical data from previous years for comparison with data reported under

- 165 Subsections (3)(b) and (c);
- 166 (e) goals, challenges, and achievements related to the operation, activity, program, or
167 service;
- 168 (f) relevant federal and state statutory references and requirements;
- 169 (g) contact information of officials knowledgeable and responsible for each operation,
170 activity, program, or service; and
- 171 (h) other information determined by the state board that:
- 172 (i) may be needed, useful, or of historical significance; or
- 173 (ii) promotes accountability and transparency for each operation, activity, program,
174 or service with the public and elected officials.
- 175 (4)(a) Except as provided in Subsection (4)(b), the annual report shall also include:
- 176 (i) the report described in Section 53E-3-507 by the state board on career and
177 technical education needs and program access;
- 178 (ii) the report described in Section 53E-3-515 by the state board on the Hospitality
179 and Tourism Management Career and Technical Education Pilot Program;
- 180 (iii) the report described in Section 53E-3-516 by the state board on certain incidents
181 that occur on school grounds;
- 182 (iv) the report described in Section 53E-4-202 by the state board on the development
183 and implementation of the core standards for Utah public schools;
- 184 (v) the report described in Section 53E-5-310 by the state board on school ~~turnaround~~
185 improvement and leadership development;
- 186 (vi) the report described in Section 53E-10-308 by the state board and Utah Board of
187 Higher Education on student participation in the concurrent enrollment program;
- 188 (vii) the report described in Section 53F-5-506 by the state board on information
189 related to personalized, competency-based learning;
- 190 (viii) the report described in Section ~~[53G-8-203]~~ 53G-8-301 by the state board on
191 LEAs' policies and procedures related to physical restraint and interventions; and
- 192 (ix) the report described in Section 53G-9-802 by the state board on dropout
193 prevention and recovery services.
- 194 (b) The Education Interim Committee or the Public Education Appropriations
195 Subcommittee may request a report described in Subsection (4)(a) to be reported
196 separately from the State Superintendent's Annual Report.
- 197 (5) The annual report shall be designed to provide clear, accurate, and accessible
198 information to the public, the governor, and the Legislature.

- 199 (6) The state board shall:
- 200 (a) submit the annual report in accordance with Section 68-3-14; and
- 201 (b) make the annual report, and previous annual reports, accessible to the public by
- 202 placing a link to the reports on the state board's website.
- 203 (7)(a) Upon request of the Education Interim Committee or Public Education
- 204 Appropriations Subcommittee, the state board shall present the State Superintendent's
- 205 Annual Report to either committee.
- 206 (b) After submitting the State Superintendent's Annual Report in accordance with this
- 207 section, the state board may supplement the report at a later time with updated data,
- 208 information, or other materials as necessary or upon request by the governor, the
- 209 Education Interim Committee, or the Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee.

210 Section 3. Section **53E-8-204** is amended to read:

211 **53E-8-204 . Authority of the state board -- Rulemaking -- Superintendent --**

212 **Advisory council.**

- 213 (1)(a) The state board is the governing board of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the
- 214 Blind.
- 215 (b) The state board shall, as the state board determines necessary, establish committees,
- 216 policies, or processes necessary to the function and oversight of the Utah Schools for
- 217 the Deaf and the Blind.
- 218 ~~(2)(a) The state board shall appoint a superintendent for the Utah Schools for the Deaf~~
- 219 ~~and the Blind.]~~
- 220 (a) With the approval of the state board, the state superintendent of public instruction
- 221 shall appoint and supervise a superintendent of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the
- 222 Blind who reports directly to the state superintendent.
- 223 (b) The state board shall make rules in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah
- 224 Administrative Rulemaking Act, regarding the qualifications, terms of employment,
- 225 and duties of the superintendent for the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.
- 226 (3) The superintendent shall:
- 227 (a) subject to the approval of the state board, appoint an associate superintendent to
- 228 administer the Utah School for the Deaf based on:
- 229 (i) demonstrated competency as an expert educator of deaf persons; and
- 230 (ii) knowledge of school management and the instruction of deaf persons; and
- 231 (b) subject to the approval of the state board, appoint an associate superintendent to
- 232 administer the Utah School for the Blind based on:

- 233 (i) demonstrated competency as an expert educator of blind persons; and
 234 (ii) knowledge of school management and the instruction of blind persons, including
 235 an understanding of the unique needs and education of deafblind persons.

236 (4) The state board shall:

237 (a) approve the annual budget and expenditures of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the
 238 Blind; and

239 (b) administer the financial operations of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.

240 (5)(a) The state board shall submit a report in accordance with Section 53E-1-201 on the
 241 Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.

242 (b) The state board shall ensure that the report described in Subsection (5)(a) includes:

243 (i) a financial report;

244 (ii) a report on Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind programs and activities; and

245 (iii) a report of student academic performance.

246 Section 4. Section **53E-10-310** is amended to read:

247 **53E-10-310 . Utah first credential program.**

248 (1) As used in this section:

249 (a) "Eligible institution" means an institution of higher education as defined in Section
 250 53H-1-101.

251 (b) "First credential" means a certificate awarded by the state board to an eligible student
 252 who meets the criteria described in Subsection (7).

253 (c)(i) "Industry-recognized credential" means a credential that is:

254 (A) developed and offered by, or endorsed by, a nationally recognized industry
 255 association or organization representing a sizable portion of the industry sector;

256 (B) sought or accepted by employers within the industry or sector as a recognized,
 257 preferred, or required credential for recruitment, screening, hiring, retention, or
 258 advancement purposes; and

259 (C) regularly reviewed, updated, and validated by the issuing body to ensure
 260 ongoing alignment with industry standards and labor market needs.

261 (ii) "Industry-recognized credential" may also include a credential offered through a
 262 catalyst center as described in Section [53E-3-507.1] 53F-5-224.

263 (d) "Master credential list" means the list of approved industry-recognized credentials
 264 maintained by the state board in accordance with this section.

265 (e) "Program" means the first credential program described in this section.

266 (f) "Technical college" means the same as that term is defined in Section 53H-1-101.

- 267 (2) The commissioner of higher education, the state superintendent of public instruction,
268 and the governor's education advisor shall establish the First Credential Oversight
269 Committee comprised of:
- 270 (a) representatives from industries, including:
- 271 (i) members of professional associations or trade groups; and
272 (ii) employers from high-demand sectors as the state board determines in
273 collaboration with the Utah Board of Higher Education and the Department of
274 Workforce Services;
- 275 (b) representatives from education including:
- 276 (i) members from the state board;
277 (ii) the director of the Catalyst Center Grant Program described in Section [
278 53E-3-507.1] 53F-5-224;
279 (iii) LEA administrators, such as a superintendent or charter school director;
280 (iv) professionals from institutions of higher education, including technical colleges;
281 (v) career and technical education specialists; and
282 (vi) Talent Ready Utah; and
- 283 (c) workforce development experts, including representatives from the Department of
284 Workforce Services.
- 285 (3) The state board shall staff the First Credential Oversight Committee.
- 286 (4) The First Credential Oversight Committee shall develop a first credential master plan,
287 which shall include:
- 288 (a) a framework for developing and maintaining the master credential list;
289 (b) a comprehensive needs assessment framework that evaluates:
- 290 (i) resources available through institutions of higher education, including:
- 291 (A) faculty expertise and availability;
292 (B) facilities and equipment;
293 (C) existing certification programs; and
294 (D) potential for program expansion;
- 295 (ii) industry partnership opportunities, including:
- 296 (A) geographical proximity to potential partners;
297 (B) willingness of local industries to participate;
298 (C) capacity for work-based learning placements; and
299 (D) alignment between industry needs and educational capabilities; and
300 (iii) general resource availability, including:

- 301 (A) current funding streams and potential funding sources;
- 302 (B) existing technology infrastructure;
- 303 (C) qualified personnel and staffing needs; and
- 304 (D) professional development requirements;
- 305 (c) credential approval processes;
- 306 (d) methods for ensuring industry demand alignment;
- 307 (e) wage considerations for occupations associated with approved credentials;
- 308 (f) clear definitions of industry-recognized credentials;
- 309 (g) strategies for promoting stackability and sequencing of credentials;
- 310 (h) approaches to ensure regional relevance of credentials;
- 311 (i) mechanisms for collaboration between educational institutions, industry partners, and
- 312 workforce development agencies;
- 313 (j) strategies for continuous evaluation and improvement of the program;
- 314 (k) the creation of a credentials review committee, including membership and duties;
- 315 (l) in accordance with Subsection (17), an established framework of planning,
- 316 implementation, and student outcome performance funding for an LEA administering
- 317 first credential programming;
- 318 (m) a weighted system for the master credential list that:
- 319 (i) assigns higher values to credentials based on:
- 320 (A) alignment with high-demand, high-wage occupations;
- 321 (B) incorporation of multiple learning pathways, including coursework,
- 322 apprenticeships, internships, work-based learning, and related service
- 323 opportunities;
- 324 (C) industry recognition and portability; and
- 325 (D) stackability with other credentials or degrees; and
- 326 (ii) uses the weighted values to:
- 327 (A) determine incentive funding levels;
- 328 (B) prioritize program expansion support; and
- 329 (C) guide student career planning; and
- 330 (n) guidelines for LEAs to procure industry-recognized certification program licenses,
- 331 including:
- 332 (i) verification that certifications appear on the master credential list;
- 333 (ii) requirement for competency-based assessments in proctored environments;
- 334 (iii) documentation of local industry endorsement; and

- 335 (iv) alignment with state and federal computer science initiatives where applicable,
336 including the Computer Science for Utah Grant Program described in Section
337 53H-13-306.
- 338 (5) In accordance with the Utah First Credential Master Plan, the state board shall:
- 339 (a) ensure that the credentials review committee membership reflects a balance of
340 perspectives and expertise;
- 341 (b) develop an online application and submission system for credentialing organizations
342 and providers to submit programs for inclusion in the master credential list;
- 343 (c) establish and maintain the master credential list based on the recommendations of the
344 credentials review committee;
- 345 (d) develop clear mechanisms for students to understand how earning one credential can
346 lead to higher-level certifications or degrees; and
- 347 (e) foster partnerships between high schools, technical colleges, employers, and
348 apprenticeship programs to ensure students have access to meaningful work-based
349 learning opportunities.
- 350 (6) The state board shall:
- 351 (a) automatically include on the initial master credential list any existing credential that:
352 (i) meets the definition of industry-recognized credential under this section; and
353 (ii) is currently recognized by the state board or Utah Board of Higher Education as
354 of July 1, 2024; and
- 355 (b) review all automatically included credentials within one year to ensure ongoing
356 compliance with program requirements.
- 357 (7) The state board shall award a first credential certificate to an eligible student who
358 completes one of the following:
- 359 (a) concurrent enrollment courses, composed of:
- 360 (i) between 12 and 18 core general education credits, or as industry standards dictate,
361 with courses from different general education categories; or
- 362 (ii) a prescribed set of courses as the Utah Board of Higher Education designates;
- 363 (b) an industry-recognized credential included on the master credential list;
- 364 (c) 300 hours of completion through a youth apprenticeship program that:
- 365 (i) is described in Sections 35A-6-102 and 35A-6-104.5; and
- 366 (ii) includes courses that fulfill the requirements for an industry-recognized credential
367 included on the master credential list;
- 368 (d) completion of a technical college certificate; or

- 369 (e) completion of a Career and Technical Education Pathway program.
- 370 (8) The Utah Board of Higher Education shall ensure that credits earned for a first
371 credential certificate are:
- 372 (a) accepted and transferable to institutions of higher education, including technical
373 colleges;
- 374 (b) applicable towards relevant degree programs; and
- 375 (c) recognized by relevant industries as adequate preparation for employment.
- 376 (9) Subject to legislative appropriations, the Utah Board of Higher Education shall award a
377 first credential scholarship to each student who earns a first credential certificate.
- 378 (10) The first credential scholarship may be used at the following institutions:
- 379 (a) an institution of higher education as defined in Section 53H-1-101; or
- 380 (b) a private, nonprofit college or university in the state that is accredited by the
381 Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.
- 382 (11) The Utah Board of Higher Education shall annually determine the first credential
383 scholarship amount based on:
- 384 (a) the number of eligible students; and
- 385 (b) appropriations made by the Legislature.
- 386 (12) A student may use the first credential scholarship for:
- 387 (a) tuition and fees;
- 388 (b) books and supplies; or
- 389 (c) other educational expenses as the Utah Board of Higher Education determines.
- 390 (13) The Utah Board of Higher Education shall ensure the scholarship is valid for use
391 within three years from the date the student graduates from high school.
- 392 (14) A student may earn the first credential scholarship in addition to any other
393 state-sponsored scholarships for which the student may be eligible.
- 394 (15) The first credential oversight committee shall present the master plan described in
395 Subsection (4) to the Education Interim Committee by the November 2025 interim
396 committee meeting.
- 397 (16) Every three years, the First Credential Oversight Committee shall:
- 398 (a) review the Utah First Credential Master Plan;
- 399 (b) as needed, create a list of recommendations and update the Utah First Credential
400 Master Plan;
- 401 (c) report the list of recommendations and the updated Utah First Credential Master Plan
402 to:

- 403 (i) the state board;
- 404 (ii) the Utah Board of Higher Education;
- 405 (iii) the Department of Workforce Services;
- 406 (iv) the Education Interim Committee; and
- 407 (v) the Economic Development and Workforce Services Interim Committee.
- 408 (17)(a) The state board shall administer a first credential grant program for an LEA and
- 409 award a grant in accordance with the following process.
- 410 (b) The First Credential Oversight Committee shall establish:
- 411 (i) a needs assessment tool that evaluates:
- 412 (A) an LEA's current first credential offering;
- 413 (B) an LEA's capacity to develop or expand a first credential pathway;
- 414 (C) resources and support needed for a first credential program, including
- 415 resources available through institutions of higher education, industry
- 416 partnership opportunities, and general resource availability; and
- 417 (D) each potential barrier to implementation; and
- 418 (ii) a continuum of need to place each applying LEA.
- 419 (c) An LEA seeking a first credential grant shall submit to the First Credential Oversight
- 420 Committee:
- 421 (i) a completed needs assessment; and
- 422 (ii) a grant application that contains:
- 423 (A) current first credential data, including current credentials offered;
- 424 (B) preliminary goals for creating or expanding first credential opportunities
- 425 within the LEA; and
- 426 (C) if applicable, plans for procurement of industry certification program licenses,
- 427 including certification details and alignment with master credential list,
- 428 documentation of employer endorsements, assessment and proctoring
- 429 procedures, and integration with existing computer science programs.
- 430 (d) The First Credential Oversight Committee shall:
- 431 (i) review each submitted application and needs assessment;
- 432 (ii) assign the LEA a placement on the continuum of need; and
- 433 (iii) provide to the LEA a specific requirement for an implementation plan based on:
- 434 (A) the LEA's continuum placement;
- 435 (B) each identified area for growth;
- 436 (C) each available resource; and

- 437 (D) each additional factor the First Credential Oversight Committee determines
438 relevant.
- 439 (e) An LEA shall submit to the First Credential Oversight Committee an implementation
440 plan that includes:
- 441 (i) specific goals for expanding a first credential opportunity;
 - 442 (ii) each implementation step and timeline;
 - 443 (iii) a detailed cost projection; and
 - 444 (iv) each additional element the committee requires based on the needs assessment
445 results.
- 446 (f) The First Credential Oversight Committee shall:
- 447 (i) review the implementation plan;
 - 448 (ii) direct technical assistance to the LEA in accordance with the LEA's
449 implementation plan;
 - 450 (iii) provide feedback to the LEA to improve the implementation plan;
 - 451 (iv) approve each implementation plan that meets the established criteria; and
 - 452 (v) award an implementation grant for each approved plan.
- 453 (g) Subject to legislative appropriations, the state board shall:
- 454 (i) award an incentive grant to an LEA that:
 - 455 (A) has implemented an approved plan;
 - 456 (B) increases the number of students who earn a first credential certificate; and
 - 457 (C) achieves each established implementation goal; and
 - 458 (ii) in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act,
459 and in collaboration with the First Credential Oversight Committee, establish by
460 rule:
 - 461 (A) tiers for incentive grant awards;
 - 462 (B) performance metrics for continued funding;
 - 463 (C) reporting requirements for a grant recipient;
 - 464 (D) requirements for reporting certification program outcomes and industry
465 alignment;
 - 466 (E) procedures for coordinating with computer science initiative grants; and
 - 467 (F) guidelines for certification program procurement and implementation.
- 468 (18) In accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, and in
469 collaboration with the Utah Board of Higher Education and the Department of
470 Workforce Services, the state board shall make rules to implement the provisions of this

471 section.

472 Section 5. Section **53F-5-218** is amended to read:

473 **53F-5-218 . Grow Your Own Educator Pipeline Program.**

474 (1) As used in this section:

475 (a) "Paraprofessional" means an individual who:

- 476 (i) works with students in an LEA as a paraprofessional or in a similar teaching
477 assistant position; and
478 (ii) is not licensed to teach.

479 (b) "Program" means the Grow Your Own Educator Pipeline Program that this section
480 creates.

481 (c) "School counselor" means an educator who is:

- 482 (i) licensed as a school counselor in accordance with state board rule; and
483 (ii) assigned to provide direct and indirect services to students in accordance with a
484 school counseling program model that the state board provides.

485 (d) "School counselor assistant" means a student who is:

- 486 (i) enrolled in an accredited bachelor's degree program in a related field; and
487 (ii) completing the student's practicum experience in a school counseling department
488 under the supervision of a licensed school counselor.

489 (e) "School counselor intern" means a student who is:

- 490 (i) enrolled in an accredited school counselor master's degree program; and
491 (ii) completing the student's hours of a supervised counseling internship by applying
492 appropriate school counseling techniques under the supervision of a licensed
493 school counselor.

494 (f) "School psychologist" means an individual:

- 495 (i) whom the state board licenses to practice as a school psychologist; and
496 (ii) who is assigned to provide direct and indirect services to students within the
497 relevant school or LEA seeking program grant funding.

498 (g) "School social worker" means an individual:

- 499 (i) whom the state board licenses as a school social worker; and
500 (ii) who is assigned to provide direct and indirect services to students within the
501 relevant school or LEA seeking program grant funding.

502 (h) "Teacher" means an educator who has an assignment to teach in a classroom.

503 (2) The Grow Your Own Educator Pipeline Program is a competitive grant program created
504 to provide funding to LEAs to award scholarships to paraprofessionals, teachers, school

505 counselor assistants, and school counselor interns within the LEA for education and
506 training to become licensed teachers, licensed school counselors, licensed school
507 psychologists, or licensed school social workers.

508 (3)(a) The state board shall use money appropriated for the program to provide funding
509 to LEAs that are awarded grants under the program to award scholarships to eligible
510 candidates.

511 (b) The state board shall:

512 (i) determine the amount of an award an LEA receives under the program; and

513 (ii) prioritize the amount of an award an LEA receives based upon an LEA's
514 identified need.

515 (c) The principal within the participating LEA shall nominate a candidate for the
516 scholarship awarded under this section.

517 (4) An LEA that participates in the program may select a candidate for a scholarship award
518 if:

519 (a) the candidate is a resident of the state; and

520 (b)(i) for a paraprofessional:

521 (A) a school district or a charter school has employed the candidate as a
522 paraprofessional for at least one year before entering the program; or

523 (B) subject to Subsection (5), the candidate has experience outside of the school
524 district, the charter school, or the state that is equivalent to the experience
525 described in Subsection (4)(b)(i)(A);

526 (ii) for a teacher, the candidate:

527 (A) was a paraprofessional who was awarded a scholarship;

528 (B) was offered employment as a teacher before the teacher completed the training
529 to become a professionally licensed teacher; and

530 (C) is working as a teacher for the same LEA where the teacher previously
531 worked as a paraprofessional and was awarded the scholarship;

532 (iii) for a school counselor assistant, the candidate:

533 (A) is enrolled in a bachelor's degree program in a related field; and

534 (B) demonstrates a commitment to continue the school counselor assistant's
535 education after graduation in school counseling;

536 (iv) for a school counselor intern, the candidate is enrolled in a school counselor
537 master's degree program accredited by:

538 (A) the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational

- 539 Programs; or
- 540 (B) another regionally recognized accrediting body that meets the state board's
- 541 standards for school counselor education programs;
- 542 (v) for a school psychologist student, including a student, practicum student, or
- 543 intern, the candidate is enrolled in a school psychology education specialist or
- 544 doctorate program that the National Association of School Psychologists
- 545 accredits; or
- 546 (vi) for a candidate studying to become a school social worker, including a student or
- 547 practicum intern, the candidate is enrolled in a masters level social work program
- 548 that the Council of Social Work Education accredits.
- 549 (5) The percentage of an LEA's paraprofessional scholarship recipients who are eligible for
- 550 a scholarship using equivalent experience under Subsection (4)(b)(i)(B) may not exceed
- 551 20%.
- 552 (6) A scholarship award under the program may only be used for:
- 553 (a) tuition, books, fees, and certification tests for required coursework and licensure;
- 554 (b) stipends for mentors or school counselor assistants; and
- 555 (c) if the LEA pays 0.15 of a full-time equivalent and all employee benefits, payment of
- 556 a 0.35 full-time equivalent for:
- 557 (i) a paraprofessional, up to [~~one semester of student teaching~~] four semesters of
- 558 clinical experience; or
- 559 (ii) a school counselor assistant or school counselor intern, up to two semesters of
- 560 practicum or internship hours.
- 561 (7) An LEA shall ensure that a paraprofessional scholarship recipient is continuously
- 562 employed as a paraprofessional by the paraprofessional's LEA while pursuing a degree
- 563 using scholarship money under the program.
- 564 (8) The state board shall make rules in accordance with this section and Title 63G, Chapter
- 565 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, to administer the program, including rules
- 566 regarding:
- 567 (a) grant and scholarship application procedures;
- 568 (b) procedures for distributing scholarship money;
- 569 (c) assignment and eligibility of qualified mentors;
- 570 (d) stipends for mentors or school counselor assistants;
- 571 (e) administrative costs for regional education service agencies, as that term is defined in
- 572 Section 53G-4-410; and

573 (f) eligibility requirements for potential candidates for scholarships regarding the
 574 completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and the acceptance of
 575 other grants, tuition or fee waivers, and scholarships offered to the candidate.

576 Section 6. Section **53F-5-224**, which is renumbered from Section 53E-3-507.1 is renumbered
 577 and amended to read:

578 **[53E-3-507.1] 53F-5-224 . Applied Professional Education Experience Grant**
 579 **Program.**

580 (1) As used in this section:

581 (a) "Advisory board" means a group of individuals, which may include industry,
 582 postsecondary, and community representatives, that reviews program direction and
 583 ensures alignment with workforce needs.

584 [(a)] (b) "[Catalyst] Applied professional education experience center" or "APEX center"
 585 means a program or facility operated by an LEA that:

- 586 (i) provides learning experiences and instruction that replicate professional
 587 environments and workplace practices, including experiences obtained through
 588 the Utah First Credential program described in Section 53E-10-310;
- 589 (ii) provides profession-based learning experiences by partnering with local industry,
 590 business, and community organizations to develop and implement student projects
 591 that address specific needs or objectives identified by those partners;
- 592 (iii) aligns programs with high-skill, high-demand career pathways and
 593 postsecondary education opportunities;
- 594 (iv) incorporates industry-standard tools, technologies, and methods into instruction
 595 and student work;
- 596 (v) prioritizes student activities and profession-based learning projects to build
 597 durable professional skills aligned with industry standards and needs;
- 598 (vi) facilitates mentorship and participation by industry professionals to guide a
 599 student and evaluate the student's work;
- 600 (vii) includes an advisory board~~[composed of industry, postsecondary, and~~
 601 ~~community representatives to review program direction and ensure alignment with~~
 602 ~~workforce needs]~~; and
- 603 (viii) establishes programs or activities that address gaps in training or resources
 604 within the local or regional workforce.

605 (c) "Consortium" means two or more LEAs located within the same career and technical
 606 education geographic planning region.

- 607 ~~(b)~~ (d) "Director" means the employee described in Subsection (3).
- 608 ~~(e)~~ (e) "LEA" means:
- 609 (i) a school district;
- 610 (ii) charter school; or
- 611 (iii) the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.
- 612 ~~(d)~~ (f) "Program" means the ~~[Catalyst Center]~~ Applied Professional Education
- 613 Experience Grant Program created in this section.
- 614 (g) "Unwarranted duplication" means the overlap of resources that lead to inefficiencies,
- 615 wasted resources, or a lack of coordination in providing comprehensive career and
- 616 technical education programs.
- 617 (2) Subject to legislative appropriation as described in Section 53F-9-204, the state board
- 618 shall establish the ~~[Catalyst Center]~~ Applied Professional Education Experience Grant
- 619 Program to provide funding to an LEA to create or expand an existing ~~[catalyst]~~ APEX
- 620 center.
- 621 (3) The state board shall hire a director to oversee the program who:
- 622 (a) has demonstrated abilities in:
- 623 (i) developing and implementing innovative initiatives that transform traditional
- 624 education delivery models;
- 625 (ii) establishing public-private partnership frameworks that create student pathways
- 626 into high-growth industries; and
- 627 (iii) scaling programs that integrate real-world experiences directly into educational
- 628 environments;
- 629 (b) possesses expertise in:
- 630 (i) managing complex multi-stakeholder initiatives across education, industry, and
- 631 government sectors;
- 632 (ii) implementing data-driven organizational change strategies; and
- 633 (iii) developing sustainable funding models for innovative education programs;
- 634 (c) maintains active leadership roles in:
- 635 (i) state or national workforce innovation organizations;
- 636 (ii) industry associations focused on talent development; and
- 637 (iii) public-private collaboratives addressing workforce transformation;
- 638 (d) reports directly to the state superintendent or a deputy superintendent to ensure
- 639 appropriate program oversight and cross-departmental coordination while
- 640 maintaining distinct program objectives and outcomes;

- 641 (e) establishes formal collaboration mechanisms with the state board's career and
642 technical education director to align [eatalyst] APEX center initiatives with existing
643 career and technical education programs; and
- 644 (f) facilitates training and a collaborative network of experienced [eatalyst] APEX center
645 administrators and instructors across all participating LEAs.
- 646 (4) The director:
- 647 (a) shall:
- 648 (i) administer the program;
- 649 (ii) collaborate with the director of career and technical education to align the
650 program with the career and technical education standards described in Section [
651 ~~53E-3-507~~] 53F-5-224;
- 652 (iii) create a web-based application system to streamline submissions and allow for
653 linked supporting documentation;
- 654 (iv) ensure that grant funds are used in accordance with this section; and
- 655 (v) allow grant funds to be used for planning, including:
- 656 (A) feasibility studies;
- 657 (B) stakeholder engagement;
- 658 (C) labor market analysis;
- 659 (D) initial program design and rollout; and
- 660 (E) teacher and staff training specific to the delivery of profession-based learning;
- 661 and
- 662 (b) may collaborate with the Utah System of Higher Education and the First Credential
663 Oversight Committee established in Section 53E-10-310.
- 664 (5) An LEA applying for a grant shall demonstrate capacity for workforce alignment
665 programs within the LEA or provide a plan to establish or enhance alignment by:
- 666 (a) describing current or planned efforts to align programming with labor market needs
667 and local industry demands;
- 668 (b) outlining steps to establish or enhance partnerships with:
- 669 (i) local industries and employers to ensure workforce relevance; or
- 670 (ii) technical colleges, degree-granting institutions, or other postsecondary entities to
671 support postsecondary transitions for students;
- 672 (c) identifying proposed programming goals and how the goals address gaps in regional
673 workforce training or opportunities; and
- 674 (d) as the LEA determines relevant, planning to incorporate:

- 675 (i) career and technical student organizations;
- 676 (ii) advisory boards with representation from local industries and workforce experts;
- 677 (iii) professional learning opportunities for instructors to improve workforce-focused
- 678 skills; and
- 679 (iv) strategies for using labor market data to refine and improve program offerings.
- 680 (6)(a) An LEA may apply for a grant by submitting an application to the state board.
- 681 (b) The application shall include:
- 682 (i) a plan to:
- 683 (A) create or expand one or more [eatalyst] APEX centers; or
- 684 (B) create or expand current career and technical education offerings within the
- 685 LEA to bring the LEA's career and technical education offerings in alignment
- 686 with the definition of [a-eatalyst] an APEX center in Subsection (1);
- 687 (ii) a detailed multi-year budget, identifying proposed expenditures for each year of
- 688 the grant;
- 689 (iii) justification for any capital expenditures, including plans for building use;
- 690 (iv) a description of how the grant will be used to improve student outcomes,
- 691 including:
- 692 (A) increased access to career pathway offerings;
- 693 (B) measurable improvements in career readiness, including certifications,
- 694 credentials, or apprenticeships;
- 695 (C) increased offerings that advance students' progression toward postsecondary
- 696 education or advanced training; and
- 697 (D) plans for enhanced student engagement through real-world, profession-based
- 698 learning;
- 699 (v) evidence of any existing partnerships with industry, including letters of
- 700 collaboration;
- 701 (vi) evidence of alignment with the LEA's strategic plan and local labor market needs;
- 702 (vii) an explanation of how awarded funds will be used without unnecessary
- 703 carryforward;
- 704 (viii) a description of well-defined metrics the LEA will use to establish and measure
- 705 student proficiency;
- 706 [~~viii~~] (ix) as applicable, a description of how the [eatalyst] APEX center
- 707 programming will align with or enhance programs funded by the weighted pupil
- 708 unit add-on described in Section 53F-2-311;

709 [~~(ix)~~] (x) for applications submitted by a consortium of LEAs, a description of how:

710 (A) the [~~eatalyst~~] APEX center will serve students across the consortium;

711 (B) costs and resources will be shared; and

712 (C) economies of scale will be achieved; and

713 [~~(x)~~] (xi) a description of any proposed planning activities, including expected
714 timelines and outcomes.

715 (7)(a) The director shall:

716 [~~(a)~~] (i) prioritize an LEA that:

717 [~~(i)~~] (A) proposes innovative programming supported by local labor market data;

718 [~~(ii)~~] (B) collaborates with local postsecondary institutions and industry;

719 [~~(iii)~~] (C) demonstrates the ability to sustain the [~~eatalyst~~] APEX center after the
720 grant period;

721 [~~(iv)~~] (D) demonstrates a strong focus on student outcomes and workforce
722 alignment;

723 [~~(v)~~] (E) addresses gaps in high-demand, high-skill career pathways;

724 [~~(vi)~~] (F) ensures funds are used to enhance programming quality before
725 expansion; and

726 [~~(vii)~~] (G) provides for a large number of students to participate in [~~eatalyst~~] APEX
727 center programs without limiting participation to students based on
728 socio-economic challenges;

729 [~~(b)~~] (ii) allow an LEA to apply for:

730 [~~(i)~~] (A) smaller grants to bring existing career and technical education programs
731 to high-quality standards the state board establishes;

732 [~~(ii)~~] (B) larger multi-year grants for capital expenditures and program expansion;
733 and

734 [~~(iii)~~] (C) ensure that grant funding does not duplicate existing resources provided
735 by other state or local entities;

736 [~~(e)~~] (iii) consider the unique challenges and opportunities faced by rural LEAs in
737 developing and sustaining a career and technical education program or [~~eatalyst~~]
738 APEX center, including:

739 [~~(i)~~] (A) encouraging collaborative applications from rural consortia or regional
740 education service agencies described in Section 53G-4-410 to maximize
741 resources and impact; and

742 [~~(ii)~~] (B) grant awards that consider both rural and non-rural applicants,

- 743 recognizing regional workforce needs and program readiness; and
744 ~~[(d)]~~ (iv) allow an LEA to propose ~~[a-catalyst]~~ an APEX center collocated on the
745 campus of an institution of higher education if the application includes evidence
746 of an agreement between the LEA and the institution of higher education.
- 747 (b) The LEA:
- 748 (i) shall direct the coordination with local postsecondary institutions and industry
749 described in Subsection (7)(a)(i)(B) in a manner that the LEA determines is in the
750 best interest of the program; and
- 751 (ii) may tailor the level of collaboration described in Subsection (7)(a)(i)(B) to the
752 individual needs of each program and of each offering within the program.
- 753 (c) Nothing in Subsection (7)(a)(i)(G) allows the director to prioritize an LEA with more
754 students over an LEA with fewer students.
- 755 (8)(a) An LEA that receives a grant shall use program funds to plan for, create, establish,
756 enhance, or expand an APEX center that:
- 757 (i) provides learning experiences and instruction that:
- 758 (A) replicates professional environments and workplace practices;
759 (B) builds leadership skills;
760 (C) builds durable professional skills;
761 (D) allows students to advance as the students demonstrate proficiency through
762 well-defined metrics;
763 (E) uses student projects that address the specific needs or objectives of industry
764 partners;
765 (F) incorporates industry-standard tools, technologies, and methods;
766 (G) provides opportunities for students to develop a product or presentation that
767 the students or an industry partner shares with an audience; and
768 (H) facilitates mentorship by industry professionals to guide and evaluate the
769 student's work;
- 770 (ii) aligns programming with labor market needs and local industry demands;
- 771 (iii) establishes or enhances partnerships with:
- 772 (A) local industries and employers to ensure workforce relevance; or
773 (B) as the LEA determines, technical colleges, degree-granting institutions, or
774 other postsecondary entities to support postsecondary transitions for students;
- 775 (iv) addresses gaps in regional workforce training or opportunities;
776 (v) incorporates:

- 777 (A) career and technical student organizations as the LEA determines relevant;
 778 (B) advisory boards with representation from local industries and workforce
 779 experts;
 780 (C) professional learning opportunities for instructors to improve
 781 workforce-focused skills; and
 782 (D) strategies for using labor market data to refine and improve program offerings;
 783 (vi) focuses on the unique needs and circumstances of the local student body,
 784 community, and industry partners; and
 785 (vii) aligns with state board standards for CTE quality.
- 786 [(a)] (b) An LEA that receives a grant:
- 787 (i) may coordinate and collaborate with the Utah Board of Higher Education or an
 788 individual institution of higher education; and
 789 (ii) shall submit an annual report to the state board.
- 790 [(b)] (c) The report described in Subsection (8)(b) shall include:
- 791 (i) the use of grant funds;
 792 (ii) progress in meeting proposed goals and benchmarks, including student
 793 proficiency measurements using the well-defined metrics described in Subsection
 794 (6)(b)(viii);
 795 (iii) updates on partnerships with industry and postsecondary institutions;
 796 (iv) a demonstration of the alignment of programming with labor market data; and
 797 (v) a description of student participation and outcomes.
- 798 [(e)] (d) The state board shall ensure that awarded funds:
- 799 (i) are used in accordance with an LEA's application; and
 800 (ii) that are not used are returned for reallocation.
- 801 [(d)] (e) Upon request, the director shall submit a report on the program to the Education
 802 Interim Committee and the Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee.
- 803 (9) The Talent Ready Utah Program described in Section 53H-13-303 and the Utah Leading
 804 through Effective, Actionable, and Dynamic Education established in Section
 805 53E-10-702, shall collaborate with the state board to develop and execute a marketing
 806 and outreach plan for the [~~Catalyst Center~~] Applied Professional Education Experience
 807 Grant Program.
- 808 (10) Talent Ready Utah and the Utah Leading through Effective, Actionable, and Dynamic
 809 Education shall:
- 810 (a) execute the marketing and outreach plan described in Subsection (9); and

- 811 (b) submit an annual report to the state board that includes:
- 812 (i) the number of LEAs reached through marketing efforts;
- 813 (ii) a description of outreach activities and events conducted; and
- 814 (iii) feedback from LEAs regarding program accessibility and clarity.
- 815 (11) The state board:
- 816 (a) may provide up to 1% of the funds appropriated by the Legislature as described in
- 817 Section 53F-9-204 to administer the program;
- 818 (b) in fiscal year 2026, shall provide up to 1% of the funds appropriated by the
- 819 Legislature as described in Section 53F-9-204 to Talent Ready Utah and the Utah
- 820 Leading through Effective, Actionable, and Dynamic Education for the purposes
- 821 described in Subsections (9) and (10); and
- 822 (c) shall make rules in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative
- 823 Rulemaking Act, to implement this Subsection (11).
- 824 Section 7. Section **53F-9-204** is amended to read:
- 825 **53F-9-204 . Public Education Economic Stabilization Restricted Account.**
- 826 (1) There is created within the Uniform School Fund a restricted account known as the
- 827 "Public Education Economic Stabilization Restricted Account."
- 828 (2)(a) Except as provided in Subsection (2)(b), the account shall be funded from the
- 829 following revenue sources:
- 830 (i) 15% of the difference between, as determined by the Office of the Legislative
- 831 Fiscal Analyst:
- 832 (A) the estimated amount of ongoing Income Tax Fund and Uniform School Fund
- 833 revenue available for the Legislature to appropriate for the next fiscal year; and
- 834 (B) the amount of ongoing appropriations from the Income Tax Fund and Uniform
- 835 School Fund in the current fiscal year; and
- 836 (ii) other appropriations as the Legislature may designate.
- 837 (b) If the appropriation described in Subsection (2)(a) would cause the ongoing
- 838 appropriations to the account to exceed 11% of Uniform School Fund appropriations
- 839 described in Section 53F-9-201.1 for the same fiscal year, the Legislature shall
- 840 appropriate only those funds necessary to ensure that the ongoing appropriations to
- 841 the account equal 11% of Uniform School Fund appropriations for that fiscal year.
- 842 (3) Subject to the availability of ongoing appropriations to the account, in accordance with
- 843 Utah Constitution, Article X, Section 5, Subsection (4), the ongoing appropriation to the
- 844 account shall be used to fund:

- 845 (a) except for a year described in Subsection (3)(b) or (c), one-time appropriations to the
 846 public education system, including at least ~~Ĥ~~ → ~~[\$65,000,000]~~ \$100,000,000 ← ~~Ĥ~~
 846a to the Catalyst Center Grant
 847 Program described in Section [~~53E-3-507.1~~] 53F-5-224;
- 848 (b) the Minimum School Program for a year in which Income Tax Fund revenue and
 849 Uniform School Fund revenue are insufficient to fund:
- 850 (i) ongoing appropriations to the public education system; and
 851 (ii) enrollment growth and inflation estimates, as defined in Section 53F-9-201.1; and
- 852 (c) the minimum basic local amount as defined in Section 53F-2-301 for a year in which
 853 the minimum basic tax rate, as defined in Section 53F-2-301, is insufficient to
 854 generate the amount described in Subsection 53F-2-301(2)(a).
- 855 (4)(a) The account shall earn interest.
- 856 (b) All interest earned on account money shall be deposited in the account.
- 857 (5) On or before December 31, 2023, and every three years thereafter, the Office of the
 858 Legislative Fiscal Analyst shall:
- 859 (a) review the percentages described in Subsections (2)(a)(i) and (2)(b); and
 860 (b) recommend to the Executive Appropriations Committee any changes based on the
 861 review described in Subsection (5)(a).
- 862 (6) In preparing budget bills for a given fiscal year, the Executive Appropriations
 863 Committee shall make the one-time appropriations described in Subsection (3)(a) by
 864 appropriating at least the lesser of 10% of the total amount of the one-time
 865 appropriations to:
- 866 (a) the cost of providing 32 paid professional hours for teachers in accordance with
 867 Section 53F-7-203;
 868 (b) the amount to make the distribution required under Section 53F-2-527;
 869 (c) the cost of the Stipends for Future Educators Grant Program described in Section
 870 53F-5-223; and
 871 (d) the cost of the Rural School Sports Facilities Grant Program described in Section
 872 53F-10-303.
- 873 (7) No later than October 15 of each year, the state board shall report to the Office of the
 874 Legislative Fiscal Analyst an estimated cost for each of the one-time appropriations
 875 described in Subsection (6).

876 Section 8. Section **53G-8-213** is amended to read:

877 **53G-8-213 . Reintegration plan for student alleged to have committed violent**

878 **felony or weapon offense.**

- 879 (1) As used in this section, "multidisciplinary team" means:
- 880 (a) the local education agency;
- 881 (b) the juvenile court;
- 882 (c) the Division of Juvenile Justice and Youth Services;
- 883 (d) a school safety and security specialist designated under Section 53G-8-701.6;
- 884 (e) school safety and security director designated under Section 53G-8-701.8;
- 885 (f) a school resource officer if applicable; and
- 886 (g) any other relevant party that should be involved in a reintegration plan.
- 887 (2) If ~~[a school district]~~ an LEA receives a notification from the juvenile court or a law
- 888 enforcement agency that a student was arrested for, charged with, or adjudicated in the
- 889 juvenile court for a serious offense, the LEA and the relevant school shall develop a
- 890 reintegration plan for the student with a multidisciplinary team, the student, and the
- 891 student's parent or guardian, within five school days after the day on which the ~~[school]~~
- 892 LEA receives a notification.
- 893 (3) The relevant school described in Subsection (2) may deny admission to the student until
- 894 the school completes the reintegration plan under Subsection (2).
- 895 (4) The reintegration plan under Subsection (2) shall address:
- 896 (a) a behavioral intervention for the student;
- 897 (b) a short-term mental health or counseling service for the student;
- 898 (c) an academic intervention for the student; and
- 899 (d) if the serious offense was directed at a school employee or another student within the
- 900 school, notification of the reintegration plan to that school employee or student and
- 901 the student's parent.
- 902 (5) ~~[A school district]~~ An LEA may not reintegrate a student into a school where:
- 903 (a) a student or staff member has a protective order against the student being
- 904 reintegrated; or
- 905 (b) a student or staff member is the victim of a sexual crime or forcible felony
- 906 committed by the student being reintegrated.
- 907 (6)(a) Notwithstanding Subsection (2), ~~[a school district]~~ an LEA may elect to not
- 908 integrate a student into a school if the student has committed, or allegedly committed,
- 909 a forcible felony.
- 910 (b) If ~~[a school district]~~ an LEA elects to not integrate a student under Subsection (6)(a),
- 911 the ~~[school district]~~ LEA shall provide alternative education options for the student.

912 (7) A reintegration plan under this section is classified as a protected record under Section
913 63G-2-305.

914 (8) All other records of disclosures under this section are governed by Title 63G, Chapter 2,
915 Government Records Access and Management Act, and the Family Educational Rights
916 and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1232g.

917 Section 9. Section **53G-8-701.5** is amended to read:

918 **53G-8-701.5 . School safety needs assessment -- School safety personnel --**

919 **Alternative requirements.**

920 (1)(a) In accordance with Subsections (1)(c) through (e), no later than October 15 of an
921 applicable year, an LEA shall:

922 (i) ensure a school safety needs assessment the state security chief selects in
923 collaboration with the school safety center is conducted in accordance with
924 Subsection (1)(b) for each school or K-12 campus within the LEA to determine
925 the needs and deficiencies regarding:

926 (A) appropriate school safety personnel, including necessary supports, training,
927 and policy creation for the personnel;

928 (B) physical building security and safety, including required upgrades to facilities
929 and safety technology;

930 (C) a school's current threat and emergency response protocols, including any
931 emergency response agreements with local law enforcement;

932 (D) cardiac emergency preparedness, including an inventory of whether
933 automated external defibrillators are present and accessible, maintenance
934 status, and current staff training offerings; and

935 (E) compliance with universal access key box requirements under Section
936 53G-8-805; and

937 (ii) report the results of the school safety needs assessment for each school within the
938 LEA to the state security chief and the School Safety Center.

939 (b)(i) The school safety specialist described in Section 53G-8-701.6, in collaboration
940 with the county security chief or, regarding the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the
941 Blind, the state security chief, and with the local law enforcement of relevant
942 jurisdiction over the school as described in Section 53-25-701, shall conduct the
943 school safety needs assessment for each school.

944 (ii) A school safety and security director may fulfill the role of a school safety and
945 security specialist in conducting the school safety needs assessment.

- 946 (c) The school safety needs assessment required under Subsection (1)(a)(i) shall be
947 conducted at least once every three years for each school or K-12 campus.
- 948 (d) An LEA may implement a rotating or staggered schedule for conducting school
949 safety needs assessments among the buildings within the LEA, provided that:
- 950 (i) each school within a K-12 campus is assessed at least once every three years; and
951 (ii) the LEA documents the rotating or staggered assessment schedule and shares this
952 schedule with the state security chief, the School Safety Center, the county
953 security chief regarding a school other than the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the
954 Blind, and the local law enforcement of relevant jurisdiction as described in
955 Section 53-25-701.
- 956 (e) The LEA shall update the assessment schedule as necessary to ensure compliance
957 with the three-year assessment requirement under Subsection (1)(c).
- 958 (f) The state board shall use the results of the school safety needs assessment for each
959 school within an LEA to award a grant to an LEA in accordance with Section
960 53F-5-220.
- 961 (g) Any information or record detailing a school's needs assessment results is:
- 962 (i) a private, controlled, or protected record under Title 63G, Chapter 2, Government
963 Records Access and Management Act; and
964 (ii) available only to:
- 965 (A) the state security chief;
966 (B) the School Safety Center;
967 (C) members of an LEA governing board;
968 (D) administrators of the LEA and school the needs assessment concerns;
969 (E) only to the extent necessary to award a grant under Section 53F-5-220, the
970 state board;
971 (F) the applicable school safety personnel described in Subsection (2);
972 (G) a local law enforcement agency that would respond to the school in case of an
973 emergency; and
974 (H) the county security chief regarding a school other than the Utah Schools for
975 the Deaf and the Blind.
- 976 (h) An individual who intentionally or knowingly provides the information described in
977 Subsection (1)(g) to an individual or entity not listed in Subsection (1)(g)(ii) is guilty
978 of a class B misdemeanor.
- 979 (2)(a) An LEA shall ensure each school within the LEA has the following school safety

- 980 personnel:
- 981 (i) a school safety and security specialist described in Section 53G-8-701.6; and
- 982 (ii) based on the results of the needs assessment described in Subsection (1), at least
- 983 one of the following:
- 984 (A) a school resource officer;
- 985 (B) a school guardian; or
- 986 (C) an armed school security guard.
- 987 (b) In addition to the school safety personnel described in Subsection (2)(a), an LEA
- 988 shall designate a school safety and security director described in Section 53G-8-701.8.
- 989 (c) The same individual may serve in more than one of the roles listed in Subsections
- 990 (2)(a) and (b) if the school notifies the School Safety Center and the state security
- 991 chief of the decision to have the same individual serve in multiple roles as described
- 992 in this Subsection (2).
- 993 (d) An LEA may implement the requirements of Subsection (2)(a)(ii) before the LEA
- 994 has completed the school safety needs assessment described in Subsection (1).
- 995 (e) The state security chief in consultation with the School Safety Center shall establish
- 996 a timeline for an LEA to comply with the school safety personnel requirements of
- 997 this Subsection (2).
- 998 (3)(a) An LEA, school administrator, or private school may apply to the state security
- 999 chief for an approved alternative to the requirements described in:
- 1000 (i) Section 53-22-105;
- 1001 (ii) this section;
- 1002 (iii) Section 53G-8-701.6;
- 1003 (iv) Section 53G-8-701.8; and
- 1004 (v) Section 53G-8-704.
- 1005 (b) In approving or denying an application described in Subsection (3)(a), the state
- 1006 security chief may consider factors that impact a school or LEA's ability to adhere to
- 1007 the requirements of this section, including the school or LEA's:
- 1008 (i) population size;
- 1009 (ii) staffing needs or capacity;
- 1010 (iii) geographic location;
- 1011 (iv) available funding; or
- 1012 (v) general demonstration of need for an alternative to the requirements of this
- 1013 section.

1014 (4) A private school shall identify an individual at the private school to serve as the safety
1015 liaison with the local law enforcement of relevant jurisdiction and the state security chief.

1016 Section 10. Section **53G-8-701.6** is amended to read:

1017 **53G-8-701.6 . School safety and security specialist.**

1018 (1) As used in this section, "principal" means the chief administrator at a public school,
1019 including:

1020 (a) a school principal;

1021 (b) a charter school director; or

1022 (c) the superintendent of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.

1023 (2)(a) Subject to Subsection (2)(b) and except as provided in Subsection 53G-8-701.5(3),
1024 every campus within an LEA shall designate a school safety and security specialist
1025 from the employees of the relevant campus.

1026 (b) The school safety and security specialist:

1027 (i) may not be a principal; and

1028 (ii) may be the school safety and security director at one campus within the LEA.

1029 (3) The school safety and security specialist shall:

1030 (a) report directly to the principal;

1031 (b) oversee school safety and security practices to ensure a safe and secure school
1032 environment for students and staff;

1033 (c) ensure adherence with all policies, procedures, protocols, rules, and regulations
1034 relating to school safety and security through collaborating and maintaining effective
1035 communications with the following as applicable:

1036 (i) the principal;

1037 (ii) school staff;

1038 (iii) the school resource officer;

1039 (iv) the armed school security guard;

1040 (v) the school guardian;

1041 (vi) local law enforcement;

1042 (vii) the county security chief regarding a school other than the Utah Schools for the
1043 Deaf and the Blind;

1044 (viii) the school safety and security director;

1045 (ix) the LEA; and

1046 (x) school-based behavioral and mental health professionals;

1047 (d) in collaboration with the county security chief or, regarding the Utah Schools for the

- 1048 Deaf and the Blind, the state security chief, and with the local law enforcement of
1049 relevant jurisdiction over the school as described in Section 53-25-701:
- 1050 (i) conduct the school safety needs assessment described in Section 53G-8-701.5;
1051 (ii) in accordance with Sections 53-25-701 and 53G-8-701.5, submit the completed
1052 assessments to the School Safety Center created in Section 53G-8-802 by October
1053 15 of each year; and
- 1054 (iii) review the results of the school safety needs assessment to recommend and
1055 implement improvements to school facilities, policies, procedures, protocols,
1056 rules, and regulations relating to school safety and security;
- 1057 (e) participate on the multidisciplinary team that the school establishes;
- 1058 (f) conduct a behavioral threat assessment when the school safety and security specialist
1059 deems necessary using an evidence-based tool the state security chief recommends in
1060 consultation with the school safety center and the Office of Substance Use and
1061 Mental Health;
- 1062 (g) regularly monitor and report to the principal, local law enforcement, and, if
1063 applicable, the LEA superintendent or designee, security risks for the school resulting
1064 from:
- 1065 (i) issues with school facilities; or
1066 (ii) the implementation of practices, policies, procedures, and protocols relating to
1067 school safety and security;
- 1068 (h) coordinate with local first responder agencies to implement and monitor safety and
1069 security drills in accordance with policy and applicable procedures and protocols;
- 1070 (i) ensure that school staff, and, when appropriate, students, receive training on and
1071 remain current on the school's safety and security procedures and protocols;
- 1072 (j) following an event where security of the school has been significantly compromised,
1073 organize a debriefing with the individuals listed in Subsection (3)(c) following the
1074 recommendations from the state security chief, in collaboration with the School
1075 Safety Center, regarding strengthening school safety and security practices, policies,
1076 procedures, and protocols;
- 1077 (k) abide by any LEA, school, or law enforcement agency policy outlining the chain of
1078 command;
- 1079 (l) during an emergency, coordinate with the following individuals as applicable, the:
1080 (i) school resource officer;
1081 (ii) school guardians;

- 1082 (iii) armed school security guards;
- 1083 (iv) school administrators; and
- 1084 (v) responding law enforcement officers;
- 1085 (m) follow any LEA, school, or law enforcement agency student privacy policies,
- 1086 including state and federal privacy laws;
- 1087 (n) participate in an annual training the state security chief selects in consultation with
- 1088 the School Safety Center; and
- 1089 (o) remain current on:
- 1090 (i) a comprehensive school guideline the state security chief selects;
- 1091 (ii) the duties of a school safety and security specialist described in this Subsection (3);
- 1092 and
- 1093 (iii) the school's emergency response plan.
- 1094 (4) During an active emergency at the school, the school safety and security specialist is
- 1095 subordinate to any responding law enforcement officers.
- 1096 Section 11. Section **53G-8-701.8** is amended to read:
- 1097 **53G-8-701.8 . School safety and security director.**
- 1098 (1) Except as provided in Subsection 53G-8-701.5(3), an LEA shall designate a school
- 1099 safety and security director as the LEA point of contact for the county security chief
- 1100 regarding a school other than the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, local law
- 1101 enforcement, and the state security chief.
- 1102 (2) A school safety and security director shall:
- 1103 (a) participate in and satisfy the training requirements as follows:
- 1104 (i) only once, the training requirements described in Section 53-22-105 for school
- 1105 guardians; and
- 1106 (ii) the school resource officer and administrator training the state security chief
- 1107 approves in consultation with the School Safety Center;
- 1108 (b) if serving as a backup school guardian, satisfy all requirements described in
- 1109 53-22-105;
- 1110 (c) if the designee is an employee of an LEA, participate on the multidisciplinary team
- 1111 the LEA establishes;
- 1112 (d) coordinate security responses among, if applicable, the following individuals in the
- 1113 LEA that employs the school safety and security director:
- 1114 (i) school safety and security specialists;
- 1115 (ii) school resource officers;

- 1116 (iii) armed school security guards; and
 1117 (iv) school guardians; and
 1118 (e) collaborate and maintain effective communications with local law enforcement, a
 1119 county security chief or, regarding the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, the
 1120 state security chief, the LEA, and school-based behavioral and mental health
 1121 professionals to ensure adherence with all policies, procedures, protocols, rules, and
 1122 regulations relating to school safety and security.
- 1123 (3) A school safety and security director:
 1124 (a) does not have authority to act in a law enforcement capacity; and
 1125 (b) may, at the LEA that employs the director:
 1126 (i) take actions necessary to prevent or abate an active threat; and
 1127 (ii) temporarily detain an individual when the school safety and security director has
 1128 reasonable cause to believe the individual has committed or is about to commit a
 1129 forcible felony.
- 1130 (4) Notwithstanding Subsection 76-11-205(4), if a school safety and security director is
 1131 carrying a firearm, the school safety and security director shall carry the school safety
 1132 and security director's firearm in a concealed manner and may not, unless during an
 1133 active threat, display or open carry a firearm while on school grounds.
- 1134 (5) A school may use the services of the school safety and security director on a temporary
 1135 basis to satisfy the school safety personnel requirement of Subsection 53G-8-701.5(2).
- 1136 (6) The state security chief shall:
 1137 (a) for each school safety and security director, track each school safety and security
 1138 director by collecting the photograph and the name and contact information for each
 1139 school safety and security director; and
 1140 (b) make the information described in Subsection (6)(a) readily available to each law
 1141 enforcement agency in the state categorized by LEA.
- 1142 Section 12. Section **53G-9-702** is amended to read:
 1143 **53G-9-702 . Youth suicide prevention programs -- State board to develop model**
 1144 **programs.**
- 1145 (1) As used in the section:
 1146 (a) "Elementary grades" means:
 1147 (i) kindergarten through grade 5; and
 1148 (ii) if the associated middle or junior high school does not include grade 6, grade 6.
 1149 (b) "Intervention" means an effort to prevent a student from attempting suicide.

- 1150 (c) "Postvention" means mental health intervention after a suicide attempt or death to
1151 prevent or contain contagion.
- 1152 (d) "Program" means a youth suicide prevention program described in Subsection (2).
- 1153 (e) "Public education suicide prevention coordinator" means an individual designated by
1154 the state board as described in Subsection (4).
- 1155 (f) "Secondary grades" means:
1156 (i) grades 7 through 12; and
1157 (ii) if a middle or junior high school includes grade 6, grade 6.
- 1158 (g) "State suicide prevention coordinator" means the state suicide prevention coordinator
1159 described in Section 26B-5-611.
- 1160 (2) In collaboration with the public education suicide prevention coordinator, a school
1161 district or charter school shall implement a youth suicide prevention program, which, in
1162 collaboration with the training, programs, and initiatives described in Section 53G-9-607,
1163 shall include programs and training to address:
- 1164 (a) for elementary grades and secondary grades:
1165 (i) life-affirming education, including on the concepts of resiliency, healthy habits,
1166 self-care, problem solving, and conflict resolution;
1167 (ii) methods of strengthening the family; and
1168 (iii) methods of strengthening a youth's relationships in the school and community;
1169 and
- 1170 (b) for secondary grades:
1171 (i) prevention of youth suicide;
1172 (ii) decreasing the risk of suicide among youth who are:
1173 (A) not accepted by family for any reason, including lesbian, gay, bisexual,
1174 transgender, or questioning youth; or
1175 (B) suffer from bullying;
1176 (iii) youth suicide intervention; and
1177 (iv) postvention for family, students, and faculty.
- 1178 (3) Each school district and charter school shall ensure that the youth suicide prevention
1179 program described in Subsection (2):
- 1180 (a) considers appropriate coordination with the following prevention programs:
1181 (i) the prevention of bullying and cyber-bullying, as those terms are defined in
1182 Section 53G-9-601; and
1183 (ii) the prevention of underage drinking of alcohol and substance abuse under Section

- 1184 53G-10-406; and
- 1185 (b) includes provisions to ensure that the school district or charter school promptly
- 1186 communicates with the parent or guardian of a student in accordance with Section
- 1187 53G-9-604.
- 1188 (4) The state board shall:
- 1189 (a) designate a public education suicide prevention coordinator; and
- 1190 (b) in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services and the state
- 1191 suicide prevention coordinator, develop model programs to provide to school districts
- 1192 and charter schools:
- 1193 (i) program training; and
- 1194 (ii) resources regarding the required components described in Subsections (2)(a) and
- 1195 (b).
- 1196 (5) The public education suicide prevention coordinator shall:
- 1197 (a) oversee the youth suicide prevention programs of school districts and charter
- 1198 schools; and
- 1199 (b) coordinate prevention and postvention programs, services, and efforts with the state
- 1200 suicide prevention coordinator.
- 1201 (6) A public school suicide prevention program may allow school personnel to ask a
- 1202 student questions related to youth suicide prevention, intervention, or postvention.
- 1203 (7)(a) Subject to legislative appropriation and except as provided in Section 53F-2-525,
- 1204 the state board may distribute money to a school district or charter school to be used
- 1205 to implement evidence-based practices and programs, or emerging best practices and
- 1206 programs, for preventing suicide in the school district or charter school.
- 1207 (b) The state board shall ensure that an LEA's allocation of funds from the board's
- 1208 distribution of money under Subsection (7)(a) provides[-] :
- 1209 (i) an amount equal to at least \$1,000 per school[-] ; or
- 1210 (ii) if appropriations are not available to provide the amount described in Subsection
- 1211 (7)(b)(i), a commensurately lesser amount.
- 1212 (c)(i) A school shall use money allocated to the school under Subsection (7)(b) to
- 1213 implement evidence-based practices and programs, or emerging best practices and
- 1214 programs, for preventing suicide.
- 1215 (ii) Each school may select the evidence-based practices and programs, or emerging
- 1216 best practices and programs, for preventing suicide that the school implements.
- 1217 (8) An LEA may not charge indirect costs to the program.

1218 Section 13. **Effective Date.**
1219 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.