

2026 Legislative Wrap-Up

K-12 and Higher Education

Mike Curtis · Jeff Van Hulten · Tyler Keetch

Legislative Attorneys · Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel

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About OLRGC

The Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel (OLRGC) serves the Legislature, legislative committees, and individual legislators by providing nonpartisan policy and legal analysis, drafting legislation, staffing legislative committees, and managing legislative data and processes. OLRGC's legal staff also provides legal counsel and representation for legislative clients in state and federal court.

FY 2027 Budget Overview

Overall Budget

Total Budget: \$31.6 billion (all sources), a slight decrease of approximately \$100 million from FY 2026. General and Income Tax Funds total \$12.4 billion, a 4.8% increase from FY 2026.

Public Education Core Funding

- Weighted Pupil Unit: \$191.4 million appropriated, increasing the WPU by 4.2% to \$4,870
- Early Literacy Programs: \$25.6 million
- At-Risk Student WPU Weighting Phase-In: \$25.0 million
- Enrollment: Statewide enrollment declined by 13,602 students (2.07%) from Fall 2025 to Fall 2026, resulting in a net one-time cost of \$6.4 million in FY 2026 and an ongoing reduction of \$12.5 million beginning in FY 2027

One-Time Public Education Investments

- \$404.9M — Public Education Economic Stabilization Restricted Account (capital needs, program expansion, and strategic initiatives)
- \$35.0M — APEX (career-connected learning)
- \$28.0M — K-12 cybersecurity (Utah Cyber Center)
- \$17.8M — Offset school fee revenue loss
- \$12.4M — Student teacher stipends
- \$5.0M — Special education teacher pipeline
- \$2.5M — Reduced-price lunch support

Additional targeted funding for dyslexia screening, data systems, digital tools, and curriculum resources.

Higher Education Investments

- \$45.0M (one-time) — Research Funding Pilot Program

- \$33.6M (one-time) — Artificial Intelligence Capacity
- \$16.6M (ongoing) — Performance Funding
- \$7.0M (ongoing) — Technical College Capacity
- \$5.0M (one-time) — Cancer Research
- \$4.5M (one-time) — Outcome-Based Investment Research
- \$1.8M (ongoing) — Medical School (St. George Campus)

Emphasis on workforce alignment, innovation (AI and research), and regional access to education.

Public Education: Funding Bills

HB 300 Kyle, Harper	School District Taxation Amendments — Extends the hold harmless for the state guarantee on property tax revenue from 1 to 2 years.
HJR 8 Welton, Hinkins	Joint Resolution Regarding LEA Reporting Requirements — Resolution outlining ways the State Board can collaborate to communicate the fiscal impact of legislation on school districts and charter schools to the Legislature.
SB 62 Fillmore, MacPherson	School Finance Amendments — Changes the MSP flexible allocation to support compensation for in-class employees.
SB 77 McCay, Pierucci	Dual Language Immersion Amendments — Defines 'qualified instructor' and requires institutions to ensure a qualified instructor teaches or co-teaches upper-division language courses; requires institutions that cannot provide a qualified instructor to partner with another institution.

Public Education: Policy Bills

Technology

HB 55 Auxier, Johnson	Education Technology Amendments — Requires an education entity to notify a third-party contractor of unauthorized use of student data and terminate the contract if the contractor does not remedy the violation after notification.
HB 218 Teuscher, McKell	Digital Skills Amendments — Changes requirements for a required technology course in 7th and 8th grade to focus on digital literacy and related skills.
HB 273 Defay, Wilson	Classroom Technology Amendments — Requires USBE to create model policies on balanced technology use and AI; requires LEAs to adopt a policy based on each model policy; requires LEAs to create a resource plan for students struggling with a technology-related learning difficulty.
SB 69 Fillmore, Welton	School Device Revisions — Bans cellphones and emerging/related technology bell to bell (including lunch, recess, and passing periods), with limited exceptions.
SB 88 Fillmore, Defay	School Technology Amendments — Establishes standards for public school internet policies, requiring parent-accessible monitoring systems, a pre-approved content filtering system upon parent request, and regular review of student online access and device monitoring practices.
SB 267 Cullimore, Fiefia	Software in Education Amendments — Directs USBE to study the use of software in public schools to identify best practices related to student learning, safety, and privacy.
SB 296 Cullimore, Gricius	Student Consent Amendments — States that a student has a right to access and authorize access to their educational data; establishes informed consent requirements and protections governing student educational data.

Governance

HB 129 Thurston, Brammer	Education Board Amendments — Clarifies that rulemaking authority held by the State Board is only to the extent allowed directly in statute or related to 'agency action' as defined in the Administrative Rulemaking Act.
HB 194 Hayes, Johnson	Utah State Board of Education Ethics Amendments — Establishes an independent ethics commission for complaints against elected State Board members, similar to commissions at other levels of government.
SB 326 Grover, Gricius	School Board Election Modifications — Provides for modified terms for the president or vice president of the local school board of a new school district.

Attendance

HB 358 Welton, McKell	School Scheduling Amendments — For high schools using an attendance-validated program, requires the State Board to set the number of credits required to graduate (1 credit = at least 83 class hours).
HB 502 Welton, McKell	School Attendance Modifications — Requires the State Board to create a standardized framework for citizenship grades; creates a scholarship funded by tax donations for students achieving certain citizenship grade levels; creates a test-out option for graduation-required courses; allows LEAs to determine whether attendance can be part of a course grade.
SB 58 Fillmore, Thompson	Public School Attendance Amendments — Replaces 'school day' with 'instructional day' in the 180-day requirement; codifies definitions for attendance-related terms (attendance validated program, learner validated program, tardy, chronic absenteeism, etc.); requires LEAs to conduct regular data reviews, identify at-risk students, and create targeted interventions; requires LEA governing boards to annually review and approve attendance policy changes in a public meeting.

Health

HB 36 Hall, Stratton	Gold Medal Schools Pilot Program — USBE administers a 5-year pilot using \$15 million from the federal Rural Health Transformation Fund grant.
HB 351 Nguyen, Escamilla	School Vision Screening Amendments — Requires an LEA to notify parents after a failed Tier 1 vision screening; allows nonprofits contracting with LEAs to send home notifications after a failed screening.
HCR 11 Hall, Stratton	Resolution Urging Healthy Activities in Schools — Encourages all public schools to prioritize physical health and promote healthy eating habits.

Literacy

SB 241 Millner, K. Peterson	Early Literacy — Creates a statewide goal of 80% of 3rd graders reading on grade level by end of the 2029-30 school year; requires individualized reading plans and scaled interventions for students below benchmark; requires retention of 3rd graders below benchmark beginning 2029-30 (with good-cause exemptions); shifts literacy coach funding from the State Board to LEAs; schools below the 3rd grade goal must allocate at least 50% of TSSP funds for reading interventions; requires teacher and
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	principal evaluations to include science of reading implementation and Acadience growth data.
HB 393 Defay, Millner	Early Intervention for Dyslexia Amendments — Creates a 4-year statewide dyslexia screening pilot run by USBE in coordination with the University of Utah Education Policy Center; requires the University of Utah to develop a statewide dyslexia intervention plan and screener; requires participating schools to screen K-3 students once using the screener; requires procurement of a dyslexia intervention vendor to serve one rural and one urban public elementary school.

Civics

SB 268 Weiler, Auxier	Religious Curriculum in Schools — Creates optional allowances for a school district or charter school to teach the religious influences that impacted the founding and history of the nation.
HB 312 Auxier, Fillmore	School Curriculum and Standards Modifications — Requires USBE to identify and develop high-quality open educational resource instructional materials; beginning 2028-29, increases depth and complexity in social studies across grade levels; requires American constitutional government and United States history as two distinct semester courses; requires social studies instruction on American self-governance, founding documents including the Bible, and roles of government officials; allows LEAs to determine whether applied crafts and technical arts meet fine arts credit requirements; repeals early mathematics plan, American civics adult education initiative, early learning plan, and starting July 1, ethnic studies core standards and curriculum requirements.

School Safety

HB 44 Wilcox, Millner	School Security Personnel Standards — Updates requirements for school guardians and armed security personnel; allows principals to serve as guardians and LEAs to use special function officers; requires guardians to carry firearms at all times; beginning July 1, 2027, requires safety personnel and lead teachers to wear panic alert devices; allows all school employees (not just teachers) to participate in the Educator-Protector Program; prohibits AI glasses in schools; directs the Cybersecurity Commission to establish minimum cybersecurity standards for LEAs; establishes suggested visitor management protocols.
HB 178 Moss, Weiler	School Zone Speeding Amendments — Removes a provision providing for compensatory service observing a crossing guard for a speeding-in-a-school-zone conviction.
HB 299 Matthews, Grover	School Response to Sexual Offense — Requires an LEA to have a policy for responding when a student has been arrested for, charged with, or adjudicated for a serious offense or sexual crime.
SB 51 Owens, Wilcox	School Safety Modifications — Requires schools to create flags in student information systems to better track student discipline and incident data and ensure data transfers when a student changes schools.
SB 167 McCay, Romero	Reintegration for Disciplined Students — Allows an LEA to deny open enrollment to a student with a safe-school violation; requires schools to send transferring student records within 5 days; prohibits enrollment without receiving records or checking the data gateway for safe-school violations; requires a reintegration plan within 7 days of school starting if a student was arrested, adjudicated, or charged with a serious offense.

SB 181 Escamilla, Thompson	School Discipline Amendments — Creates standards for seclusion rooms when used to remove a disruptive student with the primary objective of de-escalating or obtaining appropriate interventions.
SB 244 Stevenson, K. Peterson	Cardiac Emergency Response Plans in Schools — Requires all schools to have cardiac emergency response plans including AED training; provides limited grants to schools for plan development and training.

School Choice

HB 126 Defay, Fillmore	Micro-Education Entity Facility Amendments — Amends provisions on zoning and land use regulations regarding microschoools and micro-education entities.
HB 426 Walter, Johnson	Online Education Service Provider Amendments — Establishes accountability requirements for learner validated programs; requires every student to have an LEA-employed licensed teacher overseeing progress; requires LEA policies to include pacing requirements, proctored assessments, sequential course completion, and maximum student-to-teacher ratios; students generate full WPU only if LEA assigns a qualified teacher of record and maintains compliant ratios.
HB 467 Pierucci, Cullimore	Utah Fits All Scholarship Program Modifications — Makes changes to the existing program to better support participating families' coordination with the program manager and private schools.
SB 54 Fillmore, Walter	Carson Smith Opportunity Scholarship Program Amendments — Makes edits to the program to better align with practices of the Utah Fits All Program.
SB 131 Balderree, Walter	Charter School Eligibility — Allows a charter school to give enrollment preference to a student who lives within the boundaries of a political subdivision containing the charter school if the student's school of residence is at capacity.

School Facilities

HB 535 Walter, McCay	Disposition of Public Property Modifications — Allows school districts to sell surplus property under the general public property disposal process if no eligible entity purchases it within 90 days.
SB 164 Wilson, T. Peterson	School Construction Amendments — Moves public school construction oversight from State Board of Education to DFCM; DFCM gains sole authority to issue construction permits and approve inspectors; establishes architect fee caps and cost matrices; mandates an online document management system and contractor/inspector registries (contractors over \$500,000 must register); DFCM may assess oversight fees and penalties up to \$25,000; rules and systems due January 1, 2027, with full compliance required for all projects starting after that date.

Educator Salary and Staffing

HB 146 Pierucci, Balderree	MASTER Program Amendments — Makes the pilot teacher leadership grant program permanent; provides \$2.4M one-time for FY27 grants.
HB 163 Wilcox, Johnson	Grow Your Own Educator Pipeline Program Amendments — Expands the existing professional development grant to include grants for teachers or paraprofessionals seeking to become special education educators.

SB 52 Fillmore, Miller	Substitute Teaching Requirements Amendments — Removes the requirement that a long-term substitute teacher must possess a teaching license.
SB 312 Johnson, Welton	Educator License Amendments — Clarifies that certain lower-level technical offenses by a teacher that may result in disciplinary action do not automatically prohibit the teacher from being employed by a school district or charter school.

LEA Administration

HB 144 Miller, Stratton	School Community Council Amendments — Shifts requirements for digital citizenship, parent member limitations, and online safety principles from school community councils to school districts and administration; requires an annual report to school community councils; mandates documentation of certain votes.
HB 145 Albrecht, McKell	School Excused Absence Amendments — Amends the definition of 'valid excuse' in compulsory education to include any reason a parent provides if the student maintains a 2.0 GPA.

Special Education

HB 143 K. Peterson, Balderree	Special Education Amendments — Requires schools to notify parents at least 30 days in advance if a boundary change will move a student's special education class; gives parents a chance to provide feedback before the decision is finalized, which schools must consider; applies to special education classes with limited exceptions for required boundary changes.
HB 448 Whyte, Johnson	Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind Amendments — Defines USDB's role in supporting LEAs and serving as the designated LEA when IEP/504 teams determine USDB is the appropriate placement; mandates partnership agreements between USDB and LEAs of record; requires LEAs to count USDB students in ADM and remit 95% of per-pupil funding; codifies an eleven-member Advisory Council; requires exhaustive State Board reviews before seeking state facility funding; establishes annual October 1 student counts by service type.

Charter Schools

SB 186 Balderree, Pierucci	Charter School Modifications — Requires the State Board to conduct a study on a funding formula for charter schools' administrative costs; establishes a charter school base funding study group; requires charter school governing board members to take an oath of office; replaces the Charter School Revolving Account with the Charter School Revolving Fund.
SB 131 Balderree, Walter	Charter School Eligibility — Allows a charter school to give enrollment preference to a student who lives within the political subdivision containing the charter school if the student's school of residence is at capacity.

Student Athletes

HB 293 Hall, Musselman	Public Education Student Athlete Protections — Prohibits a public school from participating in UHSAA if it does not include required policies (including a summer moratorium and a 6-week off-season moratorium) or does not sufficiently enforce the association's rules.
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School Fees and Lunch

HB 142 Welton, Balderree	School Fee Waiver Amendments — Limits fee waivers for overnight trips to no more than two per student per year; requires LEA governing boards to adopt policies with a dollar cap on total fee waivers; requires a student requesting a second overnight trip waiver to meet with the principal and develop an action plan.
HB 148 MacPherson, Escamilla	Tax Return Donation Amendments — Creates an optional tax donation on tax forms for individuals who would like to donate to a fund to help pay off school meal debt at school districts and charter schools.

SITLA

SB 43 Owens, Burton	Land Trusts Protection and Advocacy Office Amendments — Reorganizes Title 53D and redefines the Advocacy Office's role emphasizing its authority to represent and advocate for trust beneficiaries; introduces accountability measures for non-public education trust beneficiaries; updates trustee board nominating committee composition; mandates transparency in trust fund management; ensures compliance with legislative audits and trust principles.
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Grant Programs

HB 462 Auxier, Hinkins	School Bus Internet Access — Creates a grant program for rural school districts to retrofit school buses with Wi-Fi capacity for students to do coursework while on the bus.
SB 34 Johnson, Walter	Public Education Revisions — Committee bill carrying out State Board requests on allowable uses of Grow Your Own funds, juvenile justice reintegration terminology, and other technical matters. Substitute additions: defines 'general control and supervision' in line with USBE v. USBA; changes the Catalyst program to the Applied Educational Experience Grant Program and increases funding to \$100M.

Resolutions

HCR 13 Dominguez, Hinkins	Concurrent Resolution Regarding Technical Education — Encourages USBE and LEAs to create, expand, and offer instruction preparing students for careers in nuclear, mining, and fiber optics fields.
SCR 2 Fillmore, Wilcox	Concurrent Resolution Concerning 9/11 Remembrances — Recognizes the impact of the September 11 attacks; honors victims and first responders; encourages local governments and schools to mark the 25th anniversary with appropriate remembrances and educational activities.

Legislation Affecting Both Public and Higher Education

Data

SB 152 McKell, V. Peterson	Public and Higher Education Collaboration — Establishes a process for sharing grades 7–12 student data between public education and higher education to support college and career readiness initiatives.
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Intellectual Diversity

SB 295 Johnson, Hall	Intellectual Diversity in Education and Government — Technical clean-up of 2024 HB 261 (Equal Opportunity Initiatives); makes changes to statutes governing clubs in elementary and secondary schools; requires all approved non-curricular clubs to be treated the same regardless of viewpoint; curricular clubs may not degrade or promote personal identity characteristics; requires institutions to host public policy events with speakers representing differing views.
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Grant Programs

SB 165 Fillmore, Clancy	Economic Mobility Initiative — Creates a data sharing framework between a community-oriented nonprofit and state agencies to create community action plans for upward mobility in high-needs communities.
SB 324 Musselman, K. Peterson	Outcome-Based Investment Grant Pilot Framework — Establishes a grant framework requiring pre-funding specification of measurable outcomes, independent project evaluation, and post-award assessment. Seeds two pilot projects: a USHE grant to improve upward mobility through a digital data inventory, and a USBE grant for up to 2 LEAs to create a comprehensive school improvement pilot modeled on Houston ISD practices beginning June 1, 2023.

Employee Benefits

HB 73 Walter, McCay	Public Employee Retaliatory Action Amendments — Modifies the definition of retaliatory action to include making a complaint against an employee to a professional licensing body.
HB 79 Gwynn, Brammer	Governmental Immunity Amendments — Provides immunity from suit for governmental entities and employees responding to a disaster or potential disaster, or for first responders providing emergency medical services.
HB 147 Teuscher, Vickers	Government Form Submission Amendments — Requires all state government entities to provide an electronic option for forms, records, and information.
HB 246 Maloy, Balderree	Local Government Drug Testing Amendments — Modifies the definition of 'sample' to include oral fluid and clarifies sample types that local governmental entities or state institutions of higher education may require for drug testing.
HB 258 Peck, McCay	Insurance Coverage Amendments — Requires health insurance benefits to cover certain procedures to reverse a sex transition if procedures for a sex transition are covered.
HB 309 Hollins, Cullimore	Juneteenth Observance Amendments — Aligns the state holiday, Juneteenth National Freedom Day, with the federal holiday.
HB 329 Defay, McKell	State Employee Maternity and Leave Amendments — Modifies leave for qualifying state employees: postpartum recovery from 3 to 6 weeks; adoption under age 6, 6 weeks; foster placement, 4 weeks.

SB 193 Stratton, Brooks	State Legal Holiday Amendments — Makes Good Friday a state holiday with a half-day of paid leave; requires LEAs and higher education institutions to prioritize scheduling school breaks to coincide with Good Friday and other state holy days.
SB 229 Fillmore, Thurston	State Employee Benefits Amendments — Establishes a paid time off program under which employees receive paid time off in lieu of separate annual leave and sick leave.

Higher Education: Funding Bills

SB 216 Millner, K. Peterson	Higher Education Performance and Enrollment Funding — Establishes a process and formula for enrollment-based funding that responds to enrollment changes; requires the Board of Higher Education to complete a technical college capacity funding framework study; establishes new performance metrics including workforce responsiveness, institutional efficiency, timely degree completion, students achieving first 30 credit hours (regional universities and community colleges), research expenditures (research universities), and graduate placement rates (technical colleges).
HB 373 K. Peterson, Millner	Higher Education Innovation — Amends provisions regarding the Nucleus Institute including board appointments and compensation; allows the Commissioner of Higher Education to undertake certain duties previously dedicated to the Utah Board of Higher Education; creates the Higher Education Research Funding Pilot Program with \$50M one-time appropriated to strategically prioritize research projects and leverage matching federal and philanthropic funds.

Higher Education: Policy Bills

Governance

HB 279 V. Peterson, Millner	Higher Education Code Amendments — Clarifies which parts of certain state code apply to private institutions as well as public institutions of higher education.
HB 352 K. Peterson, Vickers	Higher Education Alignment — Directs the alignment of the system of higher education into regions for vertical and horizontal integration.
HB 353 Wilcox, McKell	Higher Education Credit Transfer Amendments — Requires institutions to reduce duplicate coursework, create clearer transfer pathways, and give students better information about how credits will be accepted.
HB 520 Thompson, Brammer	Higher Education Student Housing Study — Requires the governor's housing advisor, in consultation with the Commissioner of Higher Education, to complete a study on the impact of higher education student housing on surrounding communities.
SB 240 Wilson, Snider	Higher Education Institutional Governance — Response to OLAG's 2026-02 audit of Utah State University's governance, leadership, and culture. Refines and strengthens board of trustees roles including strategic planning, presidential evaluation, and budgetary oversight; designates boards of trustees as internal audit committees; requires presidents to consult boards on tuition increases, organizational structure, and budget; prohibits presidents from hiring outside legal counsel for litigation; clarifies that general counsel are at-will employees serving at the pleasure of the president; prohibits attorneys from serving in an administrative role.
SJR 8 Brammer, Shallenberger	Joint Resolution to Initiate a Law School at Utah Valley University — States that UVU should conduct a feasibility study on creating a law school program.

Tuition

HB 177 Koford, Millner	ROTC Resident Student Status — Grants resident student status for tuition purposes to a student who participates in an institution's ROTC program and is eligible to enlist in a branch of the U.S. military.
SB 220 Millner, V. Peterson	Veteran Scholarship Amendments — Removes a 10-year limit on a graduate tuition waiver for Purple Heart recipients; raises the tuition waiver to \$15,000.

Safety

HB 84 Brooks, Ipson	Dangerous Weapons Amendments — Allows individuals 21 and older to conceal carry without a permit on public higher education campuses; prohibits open carry by anyone (including those with a concealed carry permit) on higher education and K-12 campuses; allows on-campus residents to request a roommate who does not possess a firearm.
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Facilities

HB 508 Brooks, Ipson	State Facilities Modifications — Establishes requirements for a proposal for a higher education capital facility project funding request through the dedicated and non-dedicated project approval process, heard and prioritized by the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee.
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Students

HB 204 M. Petersen, Brammer	Higher Education Student Belief Accommodation — Broadens the scope of requirements for reasonable accommodation of a student's sincerely held religious and conscience beliefs regarding examinations or assignments in required courses, as long as the accommodation does not create a fundamental alteration.
HB 547 Clancy, McKell	Transnational Repression Amendments — Requires the board to direct institutions to provide information on transnational repression to international students; creates a criminal penalty enhancement for any crime committed at the direction of a foreign government to cause a victim to undertake or refrain from certain conduct.
SB 195 Millner, K. Peterson	Workforce Development — Opts the state into the federal Workforce Pell Grant created in HR 1 and makes minor changes to the First Credential program.

Civics

HB 219 Ballard, Fillmore	Higher Education Civics Amendments — Requires the Utah Board of Higher Education to create a policy providing institutions with lists of founding and seminal documents to be used as source material in general education writing courses.
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What's Next

Current Legislative Audits in Progress

- 2026-02: A Performance Audit of Utah State University's Governance, Leadership, and Culture (Report published)
- Limited Review of School Districts' Impact — A review of the impact school districts have on student performance (Phase: Report writing)
- Public Education Reading Programs — Examination of early literacy in K-3 in Utah compared to legislative targets (Phase: Field Work)
- Higher Education High Risk – Tenure — Developing and determining the highest risks posed to higher education in Utah (Phase: Field Work)
- Higher Education High Risk – High Impact Programs — An evaluation of high impact programs in higher education (Phase: Field Work)
- South Summit School District — An efficiency and effectiveness review in OLAG's series of LEA audits (Phase: Field Work)
- Higher Education High Risk List – Admission — An evaluation of the admissions process for certain institutions (Phase: Field Work)

2026 Interim Study

The Legislative Management Committee meets April 16 to determine the 2026 interim study list.

Contact Information

Mike Curtis: michaelcurtis@le.utah.gov

Jeff Van Hulten: jvhulten@le.utah.gov

Tyler Keetch: tkeetch@le.utah.gov