

SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM AMENDMENTS

2023 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Dan N. Johnson

Senate Sponsor: Ann Millner

Cosponsors:	Marsha Judkins	Ryan D. Wilcox
Cheryl K. Acton	Karen M. Peterson	
Melissa G. Ballard	Mike Schultz	
Joel K. Briscoe		

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill enacts provisions relating to school absenteeism and student behavior.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- ▶ directs local education agencies to include certain evidence-based strategies for children as part of their efforts to reduce student absenteeism;
- ▶ enacts new duties for the State Board of Education with respect to addressing chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention; and
- ▶ amends the responsibilities of the Division of Juvenile Justice and Youth Services to require the use of evidence-informed and research-informed interventions.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

53G-6-206, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2021, Chapter 262

28 **53G-9-802**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 337

29 **80-5-401**, as renumbered and amended by Laws of Utah 2021, Chapter 261

30 ENACTS:

31 **53G-9-804**, Utah Code Annotated 1953



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

34 Section 1. Section **53G-6-206** is amended to read:

35 **53G-6-206. Duties of a local school board, charter school governing board, or**
36 **school district in promoting regular attendance -- Parental involvement -- Liability not**
37 **imposed -- Report to state board.**

38 (1) (a) As used in this section, "intervention" means a series of non-punitive and
39 increasingly frequent and individualized activities that are designed to:

40 (i) create a trusting relationship between teachers, students, and parents;

41 (ii) improve attendance;

42 (iii) improve academic outcomes; and

43 (iv) reduce negative behavior referrals.

44 (b) "Intervention" includes:

45 (i) mentorship programs;

46 (ii) family connection to community resources;

47 (iii) academic support through small group or individualized tutoring or similar
48 methods; and

49 (iv) teaching executive function skills, including:

50 (A) planning;

51 (B) goal setting;

52 (C) understanding and following multi-step directions; and

53 (D) self-regulation.

54 ~~[(1)]~~ (2) (a) Subject to Subsection ~~[(1)(b)]~~ (2)(b), a local school board, charter school
55 governing board, or school district shall make efforts to ~~[resolve the school attendance~~

56 ~~problems of]~~ promote regular attendance and resolve school absenteeism and truancy issues for
57 each school-age child who is, or should be, enrolled in the school district or charter school.

58 (b) A school-age child exempt from school attendance under Section 53G-6-204 or
59 53G-6-702, or a school-age child who is enrolled in a regularly established private school or
60 part-time school, is not considered to be a school-age child who is or should be enrolled in a
61 school district or charter school under Subsection ~~[(1)(a)]~~ (2)(a).

62 ~~[(2)]~~ (3) The efforts described in Subsection ~~[(1)]~~ (2) shall include, as reasonably
63 feasible:

64 (a) counseling of the school-age child by school authorities;

65 (b) (i) issuing a notice of truancy to the school-age child in accordance with Section
66 53G-6-203; or

67 (ii) issuing a notice of compulsory education violation to the school-age child's parent
68 in accordance with Section 53G-6-202;

69 (c) making any necessary adjustment to the curriculum and schedule to meet special
70 needs of the school-age child;

71 (d) considering alternatives proposed by the school-age child's parent;

72 (e) monitoring school attendance of the school-age child;

73 (f) voluntary participation in truancy mediation, if available; and

74 (g) providing the school-age child's parent, upon request, with a list of resources
75 available to assist the parent in resolving the school-age child's attendance problems.

76 ~~[(3)]~~ (4) In addition to the efforts described in Subsection ~~[(2)]~~ (3), the local school
77 board, charter school governing board, or school district may enlist the assistance of
78 community and law enforcement agencies and organizations for early intervention services as
79 appropriate and reasonably feasible in accordance with Section 53G-8-211.

80 ~~[(4)]~~ (5) This section does not impose civil liability on boards of education, local
81 school boards, charter school governing boards, school districts, or their employees.

82 ~~[(5)]~~ (6) Proceedings initiated under this part do not obligate or preclude action by the
83 Division of Child and Family Services under Section 53G-6-210.

84 ~~[(6)]~~ (7) Each LEA shall annually report the following data separately to the state
85 board:

86 (a) absences with a valid excuse; and

87 (b) absences without a valid excuse.

88 Section 2. Section **53G-9-802** is amended to read:

89 **53G-9-802. Dropout prevention and recovery -- Flexible enrollment options --**
90 **Contracting -- Reporting.**

91 (1) (a) Subject to Subsection (1)(b), an LEA shall provide dropout prevention and
92 recovery services to a designated student, including:

93 (i) engaging with or attempting to recover a designated student;

94 (ii) developing a learning plan, in consultation with a designated student, to identify:

95 (A) barriers to regular school attendance and achievement;

96 (B) an attainment goal; and

97 (C) a means for achieving the attainment goal through enrollment in one or more of the
98 programs described in Subsection (2);

99 (iii) monitoring a designated student's progress toward reaching the designated
100 student's attainment goal; and

101 (iv) providing tiered interventions for a designated student who is not making progress
102 toward reaching the student's attainment goal.

103 (b) An LEA shall provide the dropout prevention and recovery services described in
104 Subsection (1)(a):

105 (i) throughout the calendar year; and

106 (ii) except as provided in Subsection (1)(c)(i), for each designated student who
107 becomes a designated student while enrolled in the LEA.

108 (c) (i) A designated student's school district of residence shall provide dropout recovery
109 services if the designated student:

110 (A) was enrolled in a charter school that does not include grade 12; and

111 (B) becomes a designated student in the summer after the student completes academic

112 instruction at the charter school through the maximum grade level the charter school is eligible
113 to serve under the charter school's charter agreement as described in Section 53G-5-303.

114 (ii) In accordance with Subsection (1)(c)(iii), a charter school that does not include
115 grade 12 shall notify each of the charter school's student's district of residence, as determined
116 under Section 53G-6-302, when the student completes academic instruction at the charter
117 school as described in Subsection (1)(c)(i)(B).

118 (iii) The notification described in Subsection (1)(c)(ii) shall include the student's name,
119 contact information, and student identification number.

120 (2) (a) An LEA shall provide flexible enrollment options for a designated student that:

121 (i) are tailored to the designated student's learning plan developed under Subsection
122 (1)(a)(ii); and

123 (ii) include two or more of the following:

124 (A) enrollment in the LEA in a traditional program;

125 (B) enrollment in the LEA in a nontraditional program;

126 (C) enrollment in a program offered by a private provider that has entered into a
127 contract with the LEA to provide educational services; or

128 (D) enrollment in a program offered by another LEA.

129 (b) A designated student may enroll in:

130 (i) a program offered by the LEA under Subsection (2)(a), in accordance with this
131 public education code, rules established by the state board, and policies established by the
132 LEA; or

133 (ii) the Statewide Online Education Program, in accordance with Title 53F, Chapter 4,
134 Part 5, Statewide Online Education Program.

135 (c) An LEA shall make the LEA's best effort to accommodate a designated student's
136 choice of enrollment under Subsection (2)(b).

137 (3) Beginning with the 2017-18 school year and except as provided in Subsection (5),
138 an LEA shall provide the dropout prevention and recovery services described in Subsection
139 (1)(a), for any school year in which the LEA meets the following criteria:

- 140 (a) the LEA's graduation rate is lower than the statewide graduation rate; and
- 141 (b) (i) the LEA's graduation rate has not increased by at least 1% on average over the
- 142 previous three school years; or
- 143 (ii) during the previous calendar year, at least 10% of the LEA's designated students
- 144 have not:
- 145 (A) reached the students' attainment goals; or
- 146 (B) made a year's worth of progress toward the students' attainment goals.
- 147 (4) To provide the dropout and recovery services described in Subsection (1)(a), an
- 148 LEA [~~may~~] shall do at least one of the following:
- 149 (a) contract with a third party; [~~or~~]
- 150 (b) use another program that is evidence-based as defined in Section [53G-11-303](#); or
- 151 [~~(b)~~] (c) create a dropout prevention and recovery services plan that is
- 152 evidence-informed as defined in Section [53G-11-303](#).
- 153 (5) An LEA is not subject to the requirement described in Subsection (3) if:
- 154 (a) the LEA is in the LEA's first three years of operation;
- 155 (b) the LEA's average graduation rate for the previous three years is higher than the
- 156 average statewide graduation rate for the previous three years;
- 157 (c) the LEA is a special school as that term is used in 34 C.F.R. 300.115; or
- 158 (d) the quotient of the total number of an LEA's graduating students plus 10, divided by
- 159 the total number of students in an LEA's graduating class, is equal to or greater than the
- 160 statewide graduation rate.
- 161 (6) If an LEA described in Subsection (3) contracts with a third party, the LEA shall
- 162 ensure that:
- 163 (a) a third party with whom the LEA enters into a contract under Subsection (4) has a
- 164 demonstrated record of effectiveness engaging with and recovering designated students; and
- 165 (b) a contract with a third party requires the third party to:
- 166 (i) provide the services described in Subsection (1)(a); and
- 167 (ii) regularly report progress to the LEA.

168 (7) An LEA shall annually submit a report to the state board on dropout prevention and
169 recovery services provided under this section, including:

170 (a) the methods the LEA or third party uses to engage with or attempt to recover
171 designated students under Subsection (1)(a)(i);

172 (b) the number of designated students who enroll in a program described in Subsection
173 (2) as a result of the efforts described in Subsection (7)(a);

174 (c) the number of designated students who reach the designated students' attainment
175 goals identified under Subsection (1)(a)(ii)(B); and

176 (d) funding allocated to provide dropout prevention and recovery services.

177 (8) The state board shall:

178 (a) ensure that an LEA described in Subsection (3) contracts with a third party or
179 creates a dropout prevention and recovery services plan to provide dropout prevention and
180 recovery services in accordance with Subsections (3), (4), and (6); and

181 (b) report on the provisions of this section in accordance with Section [53E-1-203](#),
182 including a summary of the reports submitted under Subsection (7).

183 Section 3. Section **53G-9-804** is enacted to read:

184 **53G-9-804. Duties of the State Board of Education.**

185 (1) The state board shall:

186 (a) adopt rules that require a local school board or charter school governing board to
187 enact chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention policies that shall:

188 (i) include provisions that reflect the individual school district's or charter school's
189 unique needs or circumstances; and

190 (ii) adopt evidence- or research-informed absenteeism and dropout prevention
191 interventions;

192 (b) support, train, and inform LEAs regarding evidence-informed or research-based
193 models to reduce dropout and chronic absenteeism;

194 (c) provide guidance to LEAs on interventions and supports available from the
195 Division of Juvenile Justice and Youth Services; and

- 196 (d) provide other technical assistance to LEAs around analysis of attendance data.
- 197 (2) The rules described in Subsection (1) may require a local school board or charter
- 198 school governing board to publicize the policies enacted by the local school board or charter
- 199 school governing board in accordance with the rules described in Subsection (1) through school
- 200 websites, handbooks, letters to parents, or other reasonable means of communication.
- 201 (3) The state board may consult with appropriate stakeholders, including:
- 202 (a) parents;
- 203 (b) youth;
- 204 (c) LEAs;
- 205 (d) human services agencies; or
- 206 (e) others as the state board develops, enacts, and administers the rules described in
- 207 Subsection (1).

208 Section 4. Section **80-5-401** is amended to read:

209 **80-5-401. Youth services for prevention and early intervention -- Program**
210 **standards -- Program services.**

211 (1) The division shall establish and operate prevention and early intervention youth
212 services programs which shall include evidence-informed and research-informed interventions
213 to:

- 214 (a) help youth and families avoid entry into the juvenile justice system; and
- 215 (b) improve attendance and academic achievement.

216 (2) The division shall adopt statewide policies and procedures, including minimum
217 standards for the organization and operation of youth services programs.

218 (3) The division shall establish housing, programs, and procedures to ensure that
219 minors who are receiving services under this section and who are not committed to the division
220 are served separately from minors who are committed to the division.

221 (4) The division may enter into contracts with state and local governmental entities and
222 private providers to provide the youth services.

223 (5) The division shall establish and administer juvenile receiving centers and other

224 programs to provide temporary custody, care, risk-needs assessments, evaluations, and control
225 for nonadjudicated and adjudicated minors placed with the division.
226 (6) The division shall prioritize use of evidence-based juvenile justice programs and
227 practices.