

EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION



THE UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Report to the Education Interim
Committee

Innovation Education Program

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STATUTORY REQUIREMENT

U.C.A. Section [53G-7-221](#)

requires the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) to submit a report on approved innovation plans, waivers of state board rule granted under Subsection (7), requested waivers of state board rule that the state board does not grant including the reason for declining to grant the waiver, innovation plans terminated under Subsection (8) including the reason for the termination, any statutory provisions that prevent (A) a local approving body from approving an innovation plan, or (B) the state board from granting a waiver of state board rule, and recommendations for legislation to address statutory provisions described in Subsection (9)(b)(v).

The State Board is required to report on this program to the Education Interim Committee annually on or before November 30.

Innovation Education Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regulatory Sandbox in Education ([S.B. 191, 2022](#)) allows a school to implement an innovative education program and apply to the State Board of Education for a temporary waiver of state board rule to support an innovative education program. Under this program, local agencies approve proposed plans which are then reported to the State Board of Education.

*Please Note: This is **not** a report of the Innovation Education Program ([H.B. 386, 2022](#)) which establishes an innovation class and grant funding.*

To date, there have been no approved innovative education programs reported to the State Board of Education under this program and no related waivers of state board rule have been requested.

BILL OVERVIEW

The Regulatory Sandbox in Education bill:

- permits a district school or charter school to:
 - create a plan to implement an innovative education program (innovation plan); and
 - apply to the State Board of Education (state board) for a waiver of state board rule;
- to support an innovative education program, permits a local education agency (LEA) to:
 - expend a percentage of state restricted funding under certain circumstances; and

- accept private grants, loans, gifts, endowments, devises, or bequests;
- requires a charter school authorizer to amend a charter school's charter agreement to:
 - incorporate an approved innovation plan; and
 - remove an innovation plan that is no longer in effect;
- requires a local school board or charter school authorizer to submit approved innovation plans to the state board;
- permits the state board to terminate an innovation plan under certain circumstances;
- requires the state board to:
 - upon request, report to the Education Interim Committee on the use of state restricted funding an LEA uses to support an innovative education program;
 - annually report to the Education Interim Committee on innovation plans; and
 - waive certain state board rules;
- defines terms; and
- makes technical changes.

SUPPORT

Last year, a recommendation was made to increase awareness of the program by adding information about the legislation on the USBE website. This has been completed by adding a link to the information on the ULEAD landing page and by creating a space specifically for the Regulatory Sandbox information.

Landing page: <https://www.schools.utah.gov/ulead/>

Dedicated page: <https://www.schools.utah.gov/ulead/legislation/sandbox>

Additionally, the bill overview was rewritten in paragraph form to add ease of reading bill text and an application template guiding interested applicants through the main documentation needed were created.

The program was promoted alongside other ULEAD projects in multiple conference sessions and information tables this year, in addition to meetings with relevant staff, such as Charter School Board leadership.

Similar efforts increased the Education Innovation Program approved

applications from 12 to 67 in the past year, but have not improved the return rate of applications for this program as yet.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Because there are no known applications for this program at the LEA level and no approved plans have been reported to the State Board of Education, a recommendation is made that the State Board of Education actively create awareness around the availability of the program and support local applications in the following ways:

1. Develop a tangible flyer to be distributed when ULEAD and USBE have information tables at events
2. Share the information strategically in the spring of 2025 as administrators begin planning for the upcoming school year through the USBE established communication channels including LEA and leadership mailing lists
3. Work with the USBE policy team to illuminate any unnecessary barriers to applicants, generate solutions to those barriers, and create further awareness for staff already working with schools seeking waivers from Board rule