Dear Superintendent:

Thank you for all you do for the good of public education in our great state.

The State Legislature has recognized the vital role of Civic and Character Education in preparing our young people to fulfill their responsibilities as the “future guardians of the liberties of our country” (President George Washington). Enclosed please find a copy of Utah Code 53A-13-109. As noted in the Code, all local school districts and the state Charter School Board are to submit a report annually before year end, which summarizes how civic and character education are achieved in their schools through an integrated school curriculum and in the regular course of school work as provided in Section 109. This report is to be submitted directly to the Commission (which the Legislature also established to provide leadership and to ensure that the appropriate continuing focus on these objectives is maintained). With your assistance and support, we hope to continually gather and share successful efforts and best practices with educators throughout the state to achieve these important shared values and objectives.

You may recall, last year’s report was completed via an online survey with specific questions that you were asked to complete. This year the Commission wanted to leave the format open and asks that you simply describe how you are integrating civic and character education throughout the regular curriculum. Feel free to provide specific examples to illustrate your responses or to highlight exemplary things happening in your district/schools. You may also want to refer back to the Code for guidance.

The deadline stated in the Code is December 31st, but in order to avoid holiday school closures we would suggest you submit your report no later than December 14th. Reports can be emailed to utahcivics@gmail.com.

On another note: last week you should have received an invitation to attend our 2nd Annual Civic Education Symposium to be held on Tuesday, November 13th. Additional invitations have been sent to social studies, government, and civic teachers as well as local school board members and charter school principals. We hope that you can send a representative or team of educators to participate in this event. Please visit civics.utah.gov for symposium registration forms and for information on more Commission activities. Registration can also be completed at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LG792L8.

We look forward to receiving your report and will be in contact with you once we have had an opportunity to review it. Again, thank you for your dedication and for all you do for Utah students.

Best Regards,

Greg Bell
Lieutenant Governor
Chair, Commission on Civic & Character Education
Title 53A
Chapter 13
Section 109

Civic and character education -- Definitions -- Legislative finding -- Elements -- Reporting requirements.


(1) As used in this section:
   (a) "Character education" means reaffirming values and qualities of character which promote an upright and desirable citizenry.
   (b) "Civic education" means the cultivation of informed, responsible participation in political life by competent citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles of representative democracy in Utah and the United States.
   (c) "Values" means time-established principles or standards of worth.

(2) The Legislature recognizes that:
   (a) Civic and character education are fundamental elements of the public education system's core mission as originally intended and established under Article X of the Utah Constitution;
   (b) Civic and character education are fundamental elements of the constitutional responsibility of public education and shall be a continuing emphasis and focus in public schools;
   (c) the cultivation of a continuing understanding and appreciation of a constitutional republic and principles of representative democracy in Utah and the United States among succeeding generations of educated and responsible citizens is important to the nation and state;
   (d) the primary responsibility for the education of children within the state resides with their parents or guardians and that the role of state and local governments is to support and assist parents in fulfilling that responsibility;
   (e) public schools fulfill a vital purpose in the preparation of succeeding generations of informed and responsible citizens who are deeply attached to essential democratic values and institutions; and
   (f) the happiness and security of American society relies upon the public virtue of its citizens which requires a united commitment to a moral social order where self-interests are willingly subordinated to the greater common good.

(3) Through an integrated curriculum, students shall be taught in connection with regular school work:
   (a) honesty, integrity, morality, civility, duty, honor, service, and obedience to law;
   (b) respect for and an understanding of the Declaration of Independence and the constitutions of the United States and of the state of Utah;
   (c) Utah history, including territorial and preterritorial development to the present;
   (d) the essentials and benefits of the free enterprise system;
   (e) respect for parents, home, and family;
   (f) the dignity and necessity of honest labor; and
   (g) other skills, habits, and qualities of character which will promote an upright and desirable citizenry and better prepare students to recognize and accept responsibility for preserving and defending the blessings of liberty inherited from prior generations and
secured by the constitution.

(4) Local school boards and school administrators may provide training, direction, and encouragement, as needed, to accomplish the intent and requirements of this section and to effectively emphasize civic and character education in the course of regular instruction in the public schools.

(5) Civic and character education in public schools are:

(a) not intended to be separate programs in need of special funding or added specialists to be accomplished; and

(b) core principles which reflect the shared values of the citizens of Utah and the founding principles upon which representative democracy in the United States and the state of Utah are based.

(6) To assist the Commission on Civic and Character Education in fulfilling the commission's duties under Section 67-1a-10, by December 30 of each year, each school district and the State Charter School Board shall submit to the lieutenant governor and the commission a report summarizing how civic and character education are achieved in the school district or charter schools through an integrated school curriculum and in the regular course of school work as provided in this section.

(7) Each year, the State Board of Education shall report to the Education Interim Committee, on or before the October meeting, the methods used, and the results being achieved, to instruct and prepare students to become informed and responsible citizens through an integrated curriculum taught in connection with regular school work as required in this section.

Amended by Chapter 404, 2011 General Session
Amended by Chapter 405, 2011 General Session