

R277. Education, Administration.

R277-917 . Gold Medal Schools Pilot Program.

R277-917-1. Authority and Purpose.

(1) This rule is authorized by:

(a) Utah Constitution Article X, Section 3, which vests general control and supervision over public education in the Board;

(b) Subsection 53E-3-401(4), which authorizes the Board to make rules to execute the Board's duties and responsibilities;

(c) Subsection 53F-5-224(3), which directs the Board to make rules to administer the Gold Medal Schools Pilot Program; and

(d) Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act.

(2)(a) The purpose of this rule is to establish standards and procedures for the administration of the Gold Medal Schools Pilot Program.

(b) The standards in this rule apply to an eligible school seeking to participate in or receiving funding under the program.

R277-917-2. Definitions.

(1) "Eligible school" means a district or charter elementary school that:

(a) provides instruction to students in kindergarten or grade 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6;

(i) is located in a county of the third, fourth, fifth, or sixth class as described in Section 17-60-104.

(2) "Gold medal recognition award" means recognition through a certificate the state board awards to an eligible school that meets the physical education criteria the state board establishes as described in Section 53F-5-224.

(3) "Participating school" means an eligible school selected by the Board to participate in the program.

(4) "Physical education criteria" means measurable Core Standards established by the Board.

(5) "Program" means the Gold Medal Schools Pilot Program established in Section 53F-5-224.

R277-917-3. Program Administration and General Requirements.

(1) The Board shall administer the program in accordance with Section 53F-5-224 and this rule.

(2) In accordance with Subsection 53F-5-224(3), implementation of the program is contingent upon the Department of Health and Human Services receiving federal funding sufficient to support the program.

(3) The Superintendent shall:

- (a) develop and publish application procedures, timelines, and evaluation criteria;
- (b) create an application process;
- (c) establish funding distribution and allowable use requirements; and
- (d) adopt procedures to monitor program implementation and outcomes.

R277-917-4. Application Requirements and Selection Criteria.

(1) An eligible school seeking participation shall submit an application in a form approved by the Superintendent.

(2) An application shall include:

- (a) a detailed implementation plan in alignment with the Rural Health Transformation Program describing how the school will:
 - (i) increase student physical activity and fitness assessments;
 - (ii) improve student nutrition education; and
 - (iii) implement a local school wellness policy focusing on the areas of physical fitness and nutrition;
 - (b) measurable, time-bound goals aligned with the purposes of the program;
 - (c) evidence-based strategies supporting the proposed goals;
 - (d) baseline data related to student health or wellness indicators, if available and as determined by the Board;
 - (e) a plan for family engagement within the program goals; and
 - (f) a description of partnerships with local entities, including health organizations, community groups, or local governments, if applicable.
- (3) The Superintendent may prioritize an eligible school that:

- (a) is located in a community with limited access to health or wellness resources;
- or
- (b) demonstrates a higher prevalence of risk factors related to student health.

R277-917-5. Physical Education Criteria and Gold Medal Recognition.

(1) The Board shall establish physical education criteria that require a participating school to demonstrate implementation of:

- (a) regular opportunities for student physical activity throughout the school day;
- (b) resources for encouraging physical activity at home;
- (c) standards-based physical education instruction;
- (d) nutrition education or programs promoting healthy eating habits; and
- (e) school policies or practices that support student nutritional health and physical activity.

(2) The Board shall ensure that physical education criteria:

- (a) are measurable and evidence-based; and
- (b) align with state or national recommendations for student physical health and physical activity, where appropriate.

(3) The Superintendent shall provide alternative or modified criteria for a student with a physical limitation or disability, consistent with applicable federal and state law.

(4) A participating school shall demonstrate compliance with the Board's physical education criteria through:

- (a) documented program implementation;
- (b) student participation data;
- (c) participation in a fitness assessment; and
- (d) other evidence required by the Rural Health Transformation Program.

(5) The Superintendent shall award funds for participating schools based on:

- (a) demonstrated need for improvement in student health outcomes;
- (b) the extent to which proposed goals are measurable and achievable;
- (c) the use of evidence-based strategies;
- (d) the quality and feasibility of the implementation plan; and
- (e) the presence of partnerships, family engagement, or community support.

(6) The Superintendent may award a gold medal recognition award to a participating school that meets or exceeds the established criteria.

R277-917-6. Distribution and Use of Program Funds.

(1) Subject to legislative appropriations, the Superintendent shall distribute program funds equally among participating schools that:

- (a) meet the physical education criteria established by the Board; and
- (b) comply with the requirements of Section 53F-5-224 and this rule.

(2) A participating school shall use program funds only for activities that directly support the purposes of the program, including:

- (a) expanding or enhancing physical activity opportunities;
- (b) improving nutrition programs or food access;
- (c) implementing or streamlining wellness initiatives and policies; and
- (d) supporting families and partnerships that promote student health.

(3) A participating school may not use program funds for:

- (a) general operating expenses unrelated to the program; or
- (b) activities that do not directly support student physical activity, nutrition, or wellness in accordance with Section 53F-5-224.

(4) The Superintendent may require documentation or verification of expenditures.

(5) The Board may use no more than 6.25% of appropriated funds for administrative costs.

R277-917-7. Reporting, Monitoring, and Accountability.

(1) A participating school shall submit an annual report to the Superintendent that includes:

- (a) progress toward the measurable goals identified in the school's application;
- (b) evidence of compliance with the Board's physical education criteria;
- (c) data demonstrating student participation or outcomes, if available; and
- (d) a detailed accounting of how program funds were used.

(2) The Superintendent shall:

- (a) review each report for compliance and program effectiveness;
 - (b) monitor participating schools for continued eligibility; and
 - (c) require corrective action if a participating school fails to meet program requirements.
- (3) The Superintendent may remove a participating school from the program for:
- (a) failure to comply with this rule;
 - (b) misuse of funds; or
 - (c) failure to demonstrate reasonable progress toward program goals.
- (4) The Board shall provide program reports to the Legislature upon request in accordance with Section 53F-5-224.

R277-917-8. Program Duration and Sunset.

- (1) This rule governs the administration of the Gold Medal Schools Pilot Program established in Section 53F-5-224.
- (2) The program is repealed July 1, 2031, unless extended by the Legislature.

KEY: physical activity, nutrition, wellness, pilot program

Date of Last Change: August 7, 2026

Authorizing, and Implemented, or Interpreted Law: Art X Sec 3; 53E-3-401; 53F-5-224; 63G-3