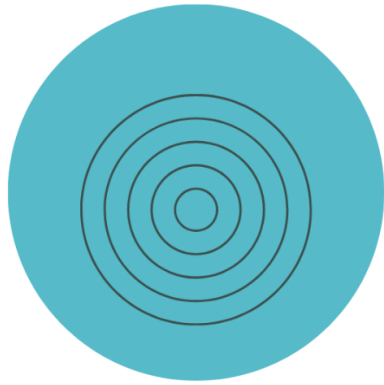


LEAs Guide to HB 273 Implementation

by

Melanie Valentine

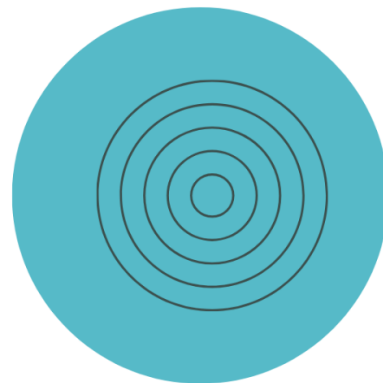
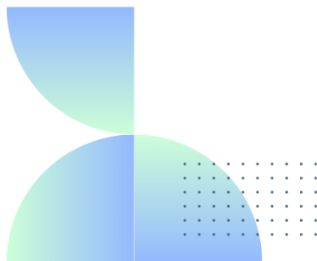
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2026-2027



Introduction: The Big Picture Welcome! Here is a clear path forward to support our teachers and students through this transition. Navigating major legislative changes can feel overwhelming, but we can do this—there is a clear path moving forward.

At its core, this legislation accomplishes three main things:

- Reduces the amount of time students will be using computers at school.
- Establishes ethical use guidelines for AI.
- Increases educator training on the balanced uses of appropriate technology at school.

Terminology

- The bill being discussed is HB 273 from the 2026 session, which became law 53G-7-228.
- Because HB 273 required interpretation by the USBE Board, it resulted in Board Rule R277-334.

The Compliance Timeline: Dates to Remember

- **August 6, 2026:** USBE passed Board Rule R277-334.
- **September 4, 2026:** USBE is scheduled to review AI policies in the Standards and Assessment Committee Meeting.
- **October 2 and November 6, 2026:** The Standards and Assessment Committee will presumably review other policies and pass them in Board Meetings.
- **December 1, 2026:** USBE is to release model frameworks for AI and for the specifics on grade-level computer use. At this time, LEAs will be able to determine if they are going to adopt the USBE policies or create their own.
- **July 1, 2027:** LEAs need to be compliant with HB 273 and Board Rule R277-334 and have teachers trained.

The December 1 Decision: Adopting or Creating Local Policies On December 1, 2026, when USBE releases the official model frameworks, LEAs have a decision to make. They must decide if they want to accept and adopt the policies as they are, or write their own tailored local policies. If LEAs miss the July 1 deadline to establish their plans, they will automatically default to using the USBE model policies.

If your LEA chooses to write their own model policies, here are the steps to follow:

- Hold open meetings to provide an opportunity for public input and discuss the local draft policy.
- Confirm that the public meeting was held and provide implementation details.
- Adopt a balanced technology policy.
- Define local grade-level frameworks.
- Establish tech-difficulty resource plans.
- Submit finalized policies to USBE.

The New Classroom Rules: A Grade by Grade Breakdown

- **K-3 Classroom:** The main idea is prioritizing early childhood development by minimizing classroom screen exposure and eliminating home-device requirements.
 - Bans all non-essential screen-time, with exceptions for introducing K-5 computer science standards or state assessments.
 - No take-home devices.
 - No 1:1 requirements.
 - Digital homework banned.
 - *Further clarification of these requirements depends on how an LEA interprets this language for the 2026-2027 school year and what language is included in the model policies to be released on December 1.*
- **Grades 4-6:**
 - Computers stay at school.
 - No homework requiring computers.
 - Technology use must be balanced with teacher-led, print-based methods.
 - Parents opt in for computer use at school.
- **Junior High:**
 - Schools must balance digital and analog lessons.
 - Parents must opt-in for take-home tech.
- **High School:**
 - Schools must balance digital and analog lessons.
 - Parents may opt-out of take-home tech.
 - High schoolers may participate in an AI sandbox if parents opt in.

Addressing the Definition of Screen-Time

- “Screen-time occurs when device use does not involve instruction, guidance, or interaction with a teacher, instructor, or designated educational personnel.”
- Non-essential screen-time is “any exposure not directly connected to instructional objectives, direct instruction, supervised academic activities, or approved accommodations. Direct instruction must be educator-led.”

The Case of Adaptive Software (ALEKS, Lexia, i-Ready) While we await official word from the K-3 Model Framework on December 1, we know what we do not want:

- We cannot use these programs just to keep students occupied so teachers can plan, give tier 2 interventions, eat lunch, or attend PLCs.
- We should not put passive computer use time in the master schedule.
- We must not ignore the data these programs provide.
- Parents will notice! If you must use adaptive software, use it deliberately, ensuring the teacher is actively engaged and data is guiding instruction.

Supporting Students and Partnering with Families

- **Tech-Difficulty Resource Plans:** LEAs must set up a plan to identify and assist students with a consistent pattern of learning difficulty with technology-based instruction.
- Schools must provide structured analog and printed alternatives.
- It is important to note that no medical diagnosis is required for this designation.

Parental Transparency & Digital Access This law and board rule also increase parental transparency and digital access:

- Schools must provide credentials access for their child's tools.
- Parents may request to see their student's browser history through activity monitoring.
- Schools are required to publish classroom disclosures of all digital tools.
- Parents have the option for real-time alerts if their student attempts to access restricted content.

Looking Ahead: AI Governance The USBE AI Policy is coming on December 1. The AI sandbox rules for grades 9-12 require:

- Human-in-the-loop grading.
- Direct supervision.
- Written parental consent.
- No use of biometric surveillance or psychological profiling.

Ongoing Reporting

- Districts will certify compliance annually.
- Policies must be updated every two years.

Tools exist! Let me know what information you need to learn, and I'll point you in the right direction.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this guide reflects the statutory and regulatory guidelines available as of August 2026. Education laws and board rules are subject to ongoing interpretation and amendment by the Utah State Board of Education. LEAs should consult the finalized USBE model frameworks (anticipated December 2026) when drafting their final compliance policies.