

Health Standards Revision Summary

In the 2025 Legislative Session, [H.B. 281](#) passed, requiring the Utah State Board to establish health curriculum requirements that include the Success Sequence as defined: "Success sequence means a three-prong framework for youth and young adults that encourages:

- completing at least a high school education and pursuing further educational opportunities;
- obtaining full-time employment; and
- having children within a healthy and stable family and marriage."

As a result, the Board approved a waiver from the approved standards revisions process to meet the legislated requirement. The approved waiver outlines the following steps:

1. Convene a committee to revise the impacted section of core standards.
2. Release the standards for a 30-day public review.
3. Revise the standards based on public review.
4. Submit the standards to the Board for approval.

These draft standards were written by the Health Education Limited Standards Writing Committee. The committee released the following draft standards to public review January 23 - February 21, 2026.

Original Draft released for public comment:

Health I Draft: Standard HI.HD.10: Define and identify the Success Sequence framework and its connection to financial stability.

- a. Define the three key components of the framework: completing at least a high school education and pursuing further educational opportunities; obtaining full-time employment; and having children within a healthy and stable family and marriage.
- b. Identify how decision-making related to school attendance and engagement can influence future educational and career opportunities, including potential consequences.

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This draft is for consideration during the March 13, 2026 – Standards & Assessment Committee meeting

Health II Draft: Standard HII.HD.10: Analyze the correlation of the Success Sequence framework (defined as completing at least a high school education and pursuing further educational opportunities; obtaining full-time employment; and having children within a healthy and stable family and marriage) to financial stability.

- a. Research and discuss the correlation between following the Success Sequence and the effects on financial stability.
- b. Formulate a personal plan that incorporates educational, career, and relationship goals aligned with the principles of the Success Sequence, planning for potential challenges.

Updated draft based on public comment:

Health I Draft: Standard HI.HD.10: Explore the Success Sequence framework (defined as completing at least a high school education and pursuing further educational opportunities; obtaining full-time employment; and having children within a healthy and stable family and marriage) as a connection to financial stability and well-being.

- a. Identify how decision-making related to school attendance, engagement, and goal setting can influence future educational and career opportunities, including potential consequences.
- b. Recognize that personal outcomes are influenced by various factors, and individuals may choose different life paths.

Health II Draft: Standard HII.HD.10: Analyze the correlation of the Success Sequence framework (defined as completing at least a high school education and pursuing further educational opportunities; obtaining full-time employment; and having children within a healthy and stable family and marriage) as a connection to financial stability and well-being.

- a. Research and discuss the correlation between following the Success Sequence and the effects on financial stability.
- b. Formulate a personal plan that incorporates educational, career, and relationship goals aligned with the principles of the Success Sequence, planning for potential challenges, supports, changing life circumstances, and individual choices.

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There were 1076 submissions to the public feedback survey, of those submissions, 520 left comments. The comments were categorized as follows, note some comments are captured in more than one category:

Categories	N	%
Definition Concern	228	44%
General Positive	163	31%
General Negative	80	15%
Misalignment with Health	34	7%

Definition concerns can be further summarized as follows, note some comments are captured in more than one category:

Definition Concerns	N	%
Education	27	12%
Children/Family	148	65%
Marriage	110	48%
<i>Both Family & Marriage</i>	89	39%
Employment	8	4%

As a result of the feedback, the writing committee added language acknowledging various experiences for individuals and personal choice.

Utah Marriage Commission sent a specific comment via email:

Standard HI.HD.10: Define and identify the Success Sequence framework, as defined in Utah law, and describe its correlation with financial stability.

- Define the three components of the framework as identified in Utah law: completing at least a high school education and pursuing further educational opportunities; obtaining full-time employment; and having children within a healthy and stable family and marriage.
- Identify how decision-making related to school attendance, engagement, and goal setting may influence future educational and career opportunities and financial outcomes.

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- Describe the Success Sequence as a population-level framework associated with financial stability, while recognizing that outcomes are influenced by many factors and that individuals may choose different life paths, including delaying or choosing not to have children.

Standard HII.HD.10: Analyze research on the correlation between the Success Sequence framework (as defined in Utah law) and financial stability.

- Analyze the Success Sequence framework as defined in Utah law and its reported correlation with financial stability.
- Research and discuss findings on the relationship between the Success Sequence and financial outcomes, including limitations of correlational data and factors that may affect outcomes across populations.
- Formulate a personal plan that includes educational, career, and relationship goals informed by the principles of the Success Sequence, with planning for obstacles, supports, changing life circumstances, and individual choices about whether and when to have children, including choosing not to have children.

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Sample comments driving the revisions by the writing committee include:

1. Family planning is a decision that should be made by the individual not by the state. Individuals that chose to not have children are important and valuable as well. This is government overreach.
2. Get rid of the success criteria altogether, but we can keep the idea of research and make a personal plan that can include educational, career, and relationship goals. Because not everyone will have the same goal. By teaching the success sequence, students might feel unnecessary pressure and anxiety, and will ultimately feel like failures if they don't meet this arbitrary version of success. Some people don't want or need to attend college to have a successful career, some people don't want to get married or have kids.
3. My feedback is the same for both standards regarding language. I support the idea that students need to consider education, career and relationships as they evaluate opportunities for future success. I disapprove of the language "having children within a healthy and stable family and marriage" and believe terminology closer to "healthy and intentional family planning" would be more appropriate to encompass the wide range healthy relationships and options for choosing when and IF children are appropriate for that scope and that person. A language adjustments also helps avoid future potential political, religious, or other controversial issues and stays focused on the financial and mental wellbeing aspects that are critical for our students.
4. I like the success framework. I think no everyone's goal is to have children so it could be helpful to open this up to be more inclusive of everyone. We want them to to be strong stable healthy humans within their familiar relationships. Can we word that to be broader?
5. The Success Sequence framework can be a helpful tool for introducing students to the idea that educational engagement, career preparation, and family planning are interconnected and can influence long-term financial stability. At the middle school level, the emphasis on completing high school and building habits related to school

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attendance, effort, and goal setting feels developmentally appropriate. Helping students understand that daily decisions—such as attending school regularly, participating in class, and seeking support when struggling—can shape future educational and career opportunities is valuable. However, at this level, it is important that the framework is presented as one possible pathway, rather than a guaranteed or prescriptive formula for success. Middle school students benefit from concrete examples of decision-making and consequences without oversimplifying complex life outcomes. Language should remain inclusive and flexible, acknowledging that students' family structures, cultural backgrounds, and access to resources vary widely.

6. The requirement for students to formulate a personal plan aligned with the Success Sequence has potential value if it is framed flexibly. Students should be encouraged to create goals that reflect their individual values, identities, and circumstances, with explicit acknowledgment that plans may change over time. Including discussion of potential challenges—and strategies for seeking support—aligns well with a strengths-based, trauma-informed counseling approach.
7. I like that school attendance and engagement are mentioned early on, providing them a foundation going into high school where they might have more flexibility with attendance and lack of engagement.
8. Like the personal plan component - empowers students to make decisions that align with their personal values and the success sequence components in their own life plans.
9. There are too many required components (per state code) required for health education and it would be great if the legislature re-assesses continually putting more on health teachers plates with classes that are only a semester long. The research supporting the success sequence is flawed, and the groups associated are concerning as a parent. The writing committee did a good job writing standards with the given flawed requirements. If the law/code can't change, these are great given the circumstances.
10. I have loved teaching this sequence this year with the curriculum support. I have found some resources online to help teach it, but would love more quick resources or state made content to teach the importance of the sequence, and how to implement the

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forming of a personal plan for their future at the middle school level. This would be a great training for a SHAPE conference course.

11. I think you should discuss a wide range of "further educational opportunities" (not just college) and emphasize the importance of tailoring your education to your career goals.
12. You also need to ensure that it is not taught in a way that pressures kids to get married or have kids. Sure, having kids is generally financially safest when you are in a stable relationship, but kids and marriage are not requirements for a good, healthy life.
13. It may be more effective to change the language to emphasize having a "stable family and marriage before having children". This small shift in the language emphasizes the sequential nature of first X, then Y. When the draft saying "having children within a healthy and stable family and marriage" it seems misleading in that the "having children" portion is in the first part of the sentence. The emphasis on decision-making at the middle school level seems very age-appropriate.
14. For Health I students, I have concerns about how the Success Sequence framework may be interpreted if not carefully framed. At this developmental stage, students may view the framework as prescriptive rather than analytical, potentially concluding that there is only one acceptable path to success. Not all students aspire to marriage or parenthood, and presenting family formation as a required component of success may unintentionally marginalize students who plan to remain child-free or unmarried, or who come from diverse family structures. There is also a risk of reinforcing gender stereotypes or suggesting that personal worth and future success are tied to reproduction. I recommend that instruction at the Health I level emphasize that the Success Sequence is one research-based model used to examine trends, not a set of expectations. Explicit acknowledgment of multiple valid definitions of success would support inclusivity and student well-being while still meeting educational goals.
15. I love the idea of a framework here, it gives students a clear structure for thinking about the future. I would suggest explicitly noting within the standard that this framework will look different for everyone. While the steps provide a foundation, students should understand that success does not follow a single prescribed path. For example, full-time

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employment can include skilled trades, service management, or other stable careers, and family decisions vary widely. Including this clarification may help prevent overly narrow interpretations and ensure the standard remains inclusive and realistic for all students.

16. I appreciate calling out factors that lead to future success. If these are included I would also like to see something about overcoming factors that either may or may not have been out of their control. A student raised by a single mom is not a failure and their path is not predetermined, which is potentially the message that is communicated here. Leaving these standards as stand alone don't tell the whole story. While taking a different path may lead to more obstacles to overcome, it is not the end and there are actions that can be taken, determination, hard work, perseverance, etc. that will contribute to future success regardless of the order that is suggested in the proposed sequence.
17. I urge you as a mother. Please do not allow this to be put in schools. It is very leading, marginalizes, and shames those who want to steer away from traditional family values. As a mother who has had infertility issues I am concerned about girls feeling devalued that cannot have children. There are religious and leading undertones can lead to a sequence of guilt, shame, depression, and suicide.
18. The only issue I have is that not everyone desires to have children. Would you consider adding the phrase "if desired" to those sentences? Also, not everyone wants to be married. I'd add the same phase to sentences pertaining to marriage.
19. I think these new standards could be beneficial, but the part about "having children within a healthy and stable family and marriage" could be less specific. There are countless ways that lives can go. Maybe some may not want a family or children. Financial stability can benefit their lives in multiple ways. There can be emphasis on alternate paths besides family and children.
20. The high school standard makes more sense, in a less specific way. It's broad enough, that students can feel the freedom to work towards other non-traditional paths to achieve success, than having a family with children.

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