

ALIGNMENT CROSSWALK

Second Step® Digital Programs ↔ Utah Portrait of a Graduate Competencies

Grade bands K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12

Purpose

This crosswalk maps the grade-banded Utah Portrait of a Graduate competencies (Utah State Board of Education, organized by grade level beginning on p. 21 of the Competencies document) against the Second Step® digital programs K–12 Scope and Sequence (Committee for Children, 2025). For each of the thirteen competencies in each grade band, this crosswalk identifies the Second Step units and representative lessons that develop the competency, rates the strength of the alignment, and explains how the program supports the standard. The goal is to show where Second Step programs can serve as primary evidence for the Portrait of a Graduate and where additional resources are needed.

How the Alignment Was Determined

Utah grade bands were matched to Second Step grades as follows: K–2 to Second Step content for Grades K, 1, and 2; 3–5 to Grades 3, 4, and 5; 6–8 to Grades 6, 7, and 8; and 9–12 to the four Second Step® High School pathways (Belonging & Connection, Confidence & Capability, Agency & Opportunity, and Well-Being & Community). Alignment reflects the substance of the learning objectives in both documents, not surface wording. Alignment is strongest for the well-being, character, resilience, and interpersonal competencies and is intentionally rated Limited where Second Step programs do not teach the relevant content (for example, academic, financial/ economic, or digital-citizenship knowledge). Sample lesson titles are included for illustrative purposes and may not include all titles of lessons that align to that competency.

Alignment Strength Key

Strong	Second Step programs provide explicit, sustained instruction that directly teaches the competency. Educators can treat these lessons as primary evidence of the standard.
Moderate	Second Step programs substantially support the competency through related skills and activities. Some elements of the standard are touched indirectly and may need a brief supplement.
Limited	Second Step programs contribute only foundational dispositions or have little direct content. Districts should pair Second Step programs with another resource to fully address this competency.

At-a-Glance Alignment Matrix

Each cell shows the strength of alignment between a Portrait of a Graduate competency and Second Step® content for that grade band. Detailed evidence follows in the grade-band sections.

Portrait of a Graduate Competency	K–2 Content	3–5 Content	6–8 Content	9–12 Content
Academic Mastery	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Wellness	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
Civic, Financial and Economic Literacy	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Digital Literacy	Limited	Limited	Limited	Moderate
Communication	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Strong
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
Creativity and Innovation	Limited	Limited	Limited	Strong
Collaboration and Teamwork	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
Honesty, Integrity and Responsibility	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
Hard Work and Resilience	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
Lifelong Learning and Personal Growth	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Strong
Service	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Respect	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong

Grade Band K–2

Utah K–2 competencies compared with Second Step® content for Grades K, 1, and 2 (Units: Growth Mindset & Goal-Setting, Emotion Management, Empathy & Kindness, Problem-Solving).

Utah Competency	Utah Grade-Band Expectation	Aligned Second Step® Content (Units and Sample Lessons)	Alignment	How Second Step® Content Supports the Competency
Academic Mastery	Retrieve, comprehend, and analyze content; make observations and use information to reach an evidence-based conclusion.	Growth Mindset & Goal-Setting (K, G1, G2 – Unit 1): Paying attention (K, L1–L2), “Mistakes Are Okay!” (K, L3), “Practice Makes Better” (K, L4), “Helpful Thoughts” (G1, L4), and “Learn and Get Better” (G2, L5).	Limited	Builds the learning behaviors—attention, persistence, practice—that underpin academic engagement but does not teach academic content or analysis skills directly.
Wellness	Explore/develop self-awareness, participate in wellness activities, and use self-advocacy to express physical and social-emotional needs with trusted adults.	Emotion Management (K, G1, G2 – Unit 2): “We Can Feel Calm” (K, L9), “What Are They Feeling?” (K, L10), “Noticing Feelings” (G1, L6), and “Help Yourself Feel Better” (G2, L8).	Strong	Directly teaches self-awareness (labeling emotions from clues), calming strategies, and asking trusted adults for help—the core of the K–2 Wellness standard.
Civic, Financial and Economic Literacy	Identify the structure of and roles within a community; identify and assign value to personal assets per wants and needs.	Empathy & Kindness (K – Unit 3): “Kindness at School” (K, L14). Problem-Solving (K – Unit 4): “Taking Turns and Sharing” (K, L19).	Limited	Touches the “classroom community” dimension through kindness and sharing but does not address community roles/structures or any financial literacy content.
Digital Literacy	Operate digital devices safely, understand appropriate disclosure of personal information, and use digital tools to learn.	No aligned unit: The K–2 digital programs include no dedicated digital citizenship lessons at this band.	Limited	No direct alignment; districts should pair Second Step content with a dedicated digital citizenship resource at K–2.
Communication	Recognize that the way things are expressed affects others; analyze others’ verbal/nonverbal communication and respond appropriately.	Emotion Management (G1 – Unit 2): “Noticing Feelings” (G1, L6). Problem-Solving (G1, G2 – Unit 4): “How to Say the Problem” (G1, L16) and “The Way to Say a Problem” (G2, L16).	Moderate	Develops reading nonverbal cues and expressing oneself respectfully, supporting much of the standard, though formal speaking/listening for audience is lighter.
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Find key information, make inferences and form generalizations; explain reasons for decisions based on new learning.	Problem-Solving (K, G1, G2 – Unit 4): “We Can Say the Problem” (K, L16), “Ready to Solve Problems” (K, L17), “We Can Make It Better” (G1, L19), “Thinking of Solutions” (G2, L17), “Which Solution?” (G2, L18), and “Be a Problem-Solver” (G2, L20).	Strong	Provides an explicit, repeated problem-solving routine—identify, generate options, choose, and justify—that maps closely onto the K–2 reasoning standard.

GRADE BAND K-2

Utah Competency	Utah Grade-Band Expectation	Aligned Second Step® Content (Units and Sample Lessons)	Alignment	How Second Step® Content Supports the Competency
Creativity and Innovation	Use imaginations, creatively explore new ideas, and make original creations.	Problem-Solving (G2 – Unit 4): “Thinking of Solutions” (G2, L17).	Limited	Encourages idea generation but offers little artistic expression or original creative production, which is the heart of this competency.
Collaboration and Teamwork	Follow group norms; promote individual and shared outcomes while engaging in mutual feedback.	Problem-Solving (K, G1, G2 – Unit 4): “Taking Turns and Sharing” (K, L19), “We Can Make It Better” (G1, L19), and “What Would I Want?” (G2, L19). Empathy & Kindness (K – Unit 3): “Showing Kindness” (K, L13).	Moderate	Reinforces cooperative behaviors and shared positive outcomes; explicit group-norm setting and structured feedback grow more in later grades.
Honesty, Integrity and Responsibility	Make sense of a situation by recalling what did/did not happen and express emotions appropriately; take ownership for actions and complete tasks.	Emotion Management (K – Unit 2): “What Are They Feeling?” (K, L10). Problem-Solving (K, G1 – Unit 4): “Apologizing Can Help” (K, L18) and “We Can Make It Better” (G1, L19). Growth Mindset & Goal-Setting (G2 – Unit 1): “How to Get Good at Something” (G2, L1).	Strong	Teaches accountability, making amends, and appropriate emotional expression—directly addressing the responsibility and integrity strands.
Hard Work and Resilience	Set short-term goals (with support); hold consistent educational interests while developing self-control.	Growth Mindset & Goal-Setting (K, G2 – Unit 1): “Mistakes Are Okay!” (K, L3), “Practice Makes Better” (K, L4), “Helpful and Unhelpful Thoughts” (G2, L3), and “Learn and Get Better” (G2, L5).	Strong	Foundational growth mindset and persistence instruction maps tightly to the K-2 resilience standard (effort, trying again, self-control).
Lifelong Learning and Personal Growth	Understand the purpose of personal improvement through goal-setting.	Growth Mindset & Goal-Setting (G2 – Unit 1): “How to Get Good at Something” (G2, L1) and “Learn and Get Better” (G2, L5).	Moderate	Introduces improvement-through-effort and simple planning; sustained self-directed goal-setting deepens in Grades 3–5.
Service	Proactively show kindness through words and actions and help/serve in school and local community.	Empathy & Kindness (K, G1, G2 – Unit 3): “We Can Be Kind” (K, L11), “Kindness at School” (K, L14), “Offering Kind Acts” (G1, L13), and “Empathy at School” (G2, L14).	Strong	An entire unit each year is devoted to identifying and performing kind acts for others—closely matching the K-2 Service standard.
Respect	Show self-respect through self-regulation; recognize and respect the feelings and ideas of community members using interpersonal skills.	Emotion Management (K, G1, G2 – Unit 2): “We Can Feel Calm” (K, L9), “Different Feelings” (G2, L9), and “Noticing Feelings” (G1, L6). Empathy & Kindness (G2 – Unit 3): “What’s Empathy?” (G2, L11).	Strong	Combines self-regulation with recognizing and valuing others’ feelings, covering both the self-respect and respect-for-others strands.

Grade Band 3–5

Utah 3–5 competencies compared with Second Step® content for Grades 3, 4, and 5 (Units: Growth Mindset & Goal-Setting, Emotion Management, Empathy & Kindness, Problem-Solving).

Utah Competency	Utah Grade-Band Expectation	Aligned Second Step® Content (Units and Sample Lessons)	Alignment	How Second Step® Content Supports the Competency
Academic Mastery	Comprehend and infer across disciplines; organize and select information to reach an evidence-based conclusion.	Growth Mindset & Goal-Setting (G3, G4, G5 – Unit 1): “Changing Your Brain” (G3, L1), “Setting a Good Class Goal” (G4, L1), “The Power of a Good Goal” (G5, L2), and “Habits for Success!” (G5, L3).	Limited	Strengthens academic dispositions (effort, planning, persistence) that support content learning but does not teach disciplinary content or analysis.
Wellness	Develop self-awareness and wellness routines; practice self-advocacy by asking trusted relationships for help with mental, physical, and social-emotional needs.	Emotion Management (G3, G4, G5 – Unit 2): “Take a Break” (G3, L8), “How to Rethink” (G4, L8), “What Is Stress?” (G5, L7), and “What Can I Change?” (G5, L9).	Strong	Explicit instruction in recognizing emotions and stress, choosing regulation strategies, and adjusting recurring situations matches the 3–5 Wellness standard well.
Civic, Financial and Economic Literacy	Develop societal awareness (local/state/national); justify wants and needs by evaluating earning, saving, and spending.	Empathy & Kindness (G5 – Unit 3): “Empathy in the Community” (G5, L11), “What’s the Problem?” (G5, L12), and “Community Solutions” (G5, L14).	Limited	G5 builds community/civic awareness and problem identification, but there is no earning/saving/spending (financial) content in this band.
Digital Literacy	Describe and model digital safety, respect others’ rights; identify credible sources and present information.	No aligned unit: The 3–5 core scope includes no dedicated digital citizenship lessons.	Limited	No direct alignment; supplement with a digital literacy curriculum at 3–5.
Communication	Differentiate and share information appropriate to audience; integrate meaning from others’ communication and respond purposefully.	Empathy & Kindness (G3, G4 – Unit 3): “My Kind of Kindness” (G3, L13), “Asking Questions” (G3, L14), and “Ask, Listen, Learn” (G4, L12). Problem-Solving (G4 – Unit 4): “Saying It Respectfully” (G4, L17).	Moderate	Builds purposeful questioning, perspective-checking, and respectful expression; audience-adapted communication is partially addressed.
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Evaluate the relevance/importance of information to justify solutions and claims; consider multiple sides and make decisions.	Problem-Solving (G3, G4, G5 – Unit 4): “STEP by Step” (G3, L16), “P: Pick a Solution” (G3, L19), “STEP into Problem-Solving” (G4, L20), “Solutions Web” (G5, L18), and “Let’s Reflect” (G5, L19).	Strong	The STEP framework gives students a repeatable, evidence- and perspective-based decision process that maps directly to the 3–5 Critical Thinking standard.

Grade Band 3–5

Utah Competency	Utah Grade-Band Expectation	Aligned Second Step® Content (Units and Sample Lessons)	Alignment	How Second Step® Content Supports the Competency
Creativity and Innovation	Identify a need and brainstorm ideas within a group to design unique solutions and artistic expressions.	Empathy & Kindness (G5 – Unit 3): “Community Solutions” (G5, L14). Growth Mindset & Goal-Setting (G5 – Unit 1): “Continuous Improvement” (G5, L5).	Limited	Group brainstorming of solutions aligns partially; design thinking and artistic expression are minimally addressed.
Collaboration and Teamwork	Contribute to group norms, build on others’ ideas, encourage equitable participation; take on a role and apply problem-solving for shared goals.	Growth Mindset & Goal-Setting (G4 – Unit 1): “Setting a Good Class Goal” (G4, L1), “Making a Plan” (G4, L2), and “Checking Our Progress” (G4, L3). Empathy & Kindness (G5 – Unit 3): “Community Solutions” (G5, L14).	Moderate	G4’s collaborative goal cycle and G5 community work build shared responsibility and joint planning, supporting much of the standard.
Honesty, Integrity and Responsibility	Assess a situation, apply empathy, and articulate how choices have positive/negative outcomes; identify steps to meet commitments and contribute productively.	Empathy & Kindness (G3, G4, G5 – Unit 3): “Do Something Kind” (G3, L5), “The Same, But Different” (G4, L11), “Changing Your Mind” (G4, L14), and “Empathy in the Community” (G5, L11). Problem-Solving (G4 – Unit 4): “A Good Problem-Solver” (G4, L16) and “A Good Solution” (G4, L19).	Strong	Empathy, perspective-taking, and weighing the impact of choices are taught directly, matching the integrity and responsibility strands.
Hard Work and Resilience	Set/achieve short- and long-term goals with prompting; understand learning is increasingly challenging, requiring consistent interest, persistent effort, self-control, and intrinsic motivation.	Growth Mindset & Goal-Setting (G3, G4, G5 – Unit 1): “Getting Better with Practice” (G3, L2), “Reflecting On Our Journey” (G4, L4), “Let’s Dream Big!” (G5, L1), and “Overcoming Obstacles” (G5, L4).	Strong	Sustained goal-setting plus explicit work on obstacles and persistence aligns closely with the 3–5 resilience standard.
Lifelong Learning and Personal Growth	Experience personal growth through self-direction and goal-setting to apply knowledge, skills, and values across settings.	Growth Mindset & Goal-Setting (G3, G4, G5 – Unit 1): “Getting Better with Practice” (G3, L2), “Reflecting On Our Journey” (G4, L4), “Habits for Success!” (G5, L3), and “Continuous Improvement” (G5, L5).	Strong	Self-directed goal-setting and reflection are central to these units, matching the Personal Growth standard.
Service	Participate in communities by addressing identified needs and serving without expectation of recognition.	Empathy & Kindness (G3, G5 – Unit 3): “Kindness and Friendship” (G3, L11), “Empathy in the Community” (G5, L11), and “Your Solution” (G5, L15).	Moderate	G5’s community focus moves students toward addressing real needs; structured, sustained service is lighter than the Utah standard implies.
Respect	Communicate one’s own culture/values; collaborate with diverse community members to understand and appreciate diverse cultures and experiences.	Empathy & Kindness (G3, G4, G5 – Unit 3): “My Kind of Kindness” (G3, L13), “Seeing It Differently” (G4, L13), “Changing Your Mind” (G4, L14), and “A Different Point of View” (G5, L13).	Strong	Perspective-taking and valuing differing preferences/experiences support respect for diverse community members.

Grade Band 6–8

Utah 6–8 competencies compared with Second Step® content for Grades 6, 7, and 8 (Units: Mindsets & Goals; Developing a Positive Sense of Self; Thoughts, Emotions & Decisions; Managing Relationships & Social Conflict).

Utah Competency	Utah Grade-Band Expectation	Aligned Second Step® Content (Units and Sample Lessons)	Alignment	How Second Step® Content Supports the Competency
Academic Mastery	Analyze, adapt, and apply content across disciplines in teacher-driven contexts; evaluate, organize, and differentiate information.	Mindsets & Goals (G6, G8 – Unit 1): “How to Grow Your Brain” (G6, L2), “Trying New Strategies” (G6, L3), “Monitoring Your Progress” (G6, L6), and “Motivation” (G8, L2).	Limited	Builds academic-success dispositions and self-regulation strongly but does not deliver disciplinary content or analytic skills.
Wellness	Practice self-awareness and self-advocacy; set goals and routines toward balance through mental, physical, and social-emotional wellness.	Thoughts, Emotions & Decisions (G6, G8 – Unit 3): “Managing Your Emotions” (G6, L17), “Understanding Stress and Anxiety” (G8, L14), “Changing Strategies and Getting Help” (G8, L18), and “My Stress-Management Plan” (G8, L19).	Strong	Directly teaches emotion and stress management, self-monitoring, and seeking help/supports—the core of the 6–8 Wellness standard.
Civic, Financial and Economic Literacy	Understand and evaluate the role of government and economy; prioritize wants and needs by allocating time, resources, and assets.	Developing a Positive Sense of Self (G6 – Unit 2): “What Are Guiding Principles?” (G6, L8) and “Making Decisions” (G6, L10). Managing Relationships & Social Conflict (G8 – Unit 4): “My Values” (G8, L20).	Limited	No government/economic or financial allocation content; only an indirect link through values-based prioritization.
Digital Literacy	Use technology safely, legally, and ethically; critically analyze sources and communicate/collaborate with varied audiences.	No aligned unit: The 6–8 core scope includes no dedicated digital citizenship unit.	Limited	No direct alignment at this band; supplement with a digital literacy resource.
Communication	Organize and express purposeful information for the audience; interpret meaning from others’ communication and respond effectively.	Managing Relationships & Social Conflict (G6, G7, G8 – Unit 4): “Respectful Communication” (G6, L23), “Conflicts and Perspectives” (G7, L22), “Resolving Conflict Part 1” (G7, L23), and “Recognizing Others’ Perspectives” (G8, L22).	Strong	Explicit instruction in respectful, audience-aware communication and in interpreting and responding to others; maps strongly to the standard.

Grade Band 6–8

Utah Competency	Utah Grade-Band Expectation	Aligned Second Step® Content (Units and Sample Lessons)	Alignment	How Second Step® Content Supports the Competency
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Analyze and select information from reliable sources to solve problems; critique issues and evaluate multiple perspectives to make and defend judgments.	Managing Relationships & Social Conflict (G6, G7, G8 – Unit 4): “Resolving Challenging Conflicts” (G6, L24), “Resolving Conflict Part 2” (G7, L24), and “Finding the Best Solution” (G8, L23). Developing a Positive Sense of Self (G6 – Unit 2): “Multiple Guiding Principles” (G6, L11) and “Using Your Guiding Principles” (G6, L13).	Strong	Students learn to define problems, evaluate options and perspectives, and defend decisions—directly matching the 6–8 Critical Thinking standard.
Creativity and Innovation	Think abstractly in creative and artistic endeavors while recognizing one’s strengths and the divergent contributions of group members.	Mindsets & Goals (G6, G7 – Unit 1): “A Soundtrack for Success” (G6, L1) and “Designing Your Future” (G7, L1).	Limited	Some creative expression and idea generation but no sustained design/innovation projects; partial fit.
Collaboration and Teamwork	Create group norms and take ownership of a role; negotiate problem-solving through soliciting team members’ perspectives and lead when appropriate.	Managing Relationships & Social Conflict (G6, G8 – Unit 4): “Considering Multiple Perspectives” (G6, L22), “Recognizing Others’ Perspectives” (G8, L22), and “Finding the Best Solution” (G8, L23).	Moderate	Negotiation, perspective-solicitation, and mutual solutions are taught; explicit role-taking and group-norm creation are addressed more indirectly.
Honesty, Integrity and Responsibility	Recognize that choices have intended and unintended outcomes; be proactive, organized, and accountable, making contributions that positively impact peers.	Developing a Positive Sense of Self (G6 – Unit 2): “Your Guiding Principles” (G6, L9). Managing Relationships & Social Conflict (G6, G7, G8 – Unit 4): “Making Amends” (G6, L25), “Taking Responsibility for Your Actions” (G7, L25), and “Making Things Right” (G8, L24).	Strong	Principle-based decision-making plus accountability and amends-making align tightly with the Integrity and Responsibility standard.
Hard Work and Resilience	Design, implement, monitor, and adjust educational/personal goals and explore occupational goals; engage in “productive struggle” with consistent interest, persistent effort, and self-efficacy.	Mindsets & Goals (G6, G7, G8 – Unit 1): “Breaking Down Your Goals” (G6, L5), “Monitoring Your Progress” (G6, L6), “Creating an If–Then Plan” (G7, L6), “Strategies for Motivation” (G8, L5), and “Your Motivation Plan” (G8, L7).	Strong	Among the strongest alignments: explicit goal design/monitoring, obstacle planning, motivation analysis, and self-efficacy mirror the 6–8 resilience standard, including productive struggle.
Lifelong Learning and Personal Growth	Develop personal growth through self-direction and goal-setting to influence ideas and actions across settings.	Developing a Positive Sense of Self (G7, G8 – Unit 2): “Your Future Self-Concept” (G7, L12), “Who Will You Become?” (G7, L13), “Agency and Confidence” (G8, L12), and “Your Confidence-Building Plan” (G8, L13).	Strong	Self-concept, agency, and self-directed goal-setting directly cultivate the Personal Growth standard.

Grade Band 6–8

Utah Competency	Utah Grade-Band Expectation	Aligned Second Step® Content (Units and Sample Lessons)	Alignment	How Second Step® Content Supports the Competency
Service	Play a role in communities by addressing selected needs; show empathy by selecting informal or formal service opportunities.	No service-specific lesson: Alignment is through the Helping Others program theme in Mindsets & Goals (G6, G7 – Unit 1).	Moderate	Themes of empathy and helping others lay groundwork but the program includes little explicit, structured community service.
Respect	Model self-respect and respect by understanding/expressing one's own group values and using adaptive strategies to recognize, support, and protect others' rights.	Managing Relationships & Social Conflict (G6, G7, G8 – Unit 4): "Respectful Communication" (G6, L23), "Conflicts and Perspectives" (G7, L22), "My Values" (G8, L20), and "Values and Relationships" (G8, L21). Developing a Positive Sense of Self (G7 – Unit 2): "Your Self-Concept" (G7, L9).	Strong	Perspective-taking, respectful communication, and values awareness address both the self-respect and respect-for-others strands.

Grade Band 9–12

Utah 9–12 competencies compared with the Second Step® High School pathways and their Grades 9–12 student activities (Pathway 1: Belonging & Connection; Pathway 2: Confidence & Capability; Pathway 3: Agency & Opportunity; Pathway 4: Well-Being & Community).

Utah Competency	Utah Grade-Band Expectation	Aligned Second Step® Content (Units and Sample Lessons)	Alignment	How Second Step® Content Supports the Competency
Academic Mastery	Analyze, synthesize, and transfer content independently across disciplines; curate information for an evidence-based conclusion.	Pathway 2 (Confidence & Capability): "Professional Problem-Solving" (G11) and "Name Your Brand" (G12).	Limited	Strengthens academic confidence, efficacy, and readiness behaviors but does not teach content mastery, synthesis, or information curation directly.
Wellness	Apply self-awareness to assess and monitor needs; set goals/routines and self-advocate for supports to develop mental, physical, and social-emotional balance.	Pathway 4 (Well-Being & Community): "Naming Emotions" (G9), "Identifying and Managing Emotions" (G11), "Compassion for a Friend" (G12), and "Practicing Self-Compassion" (G12).	Strong	Sustained instruction in emotion regulation, self-compassion, and well-being routines aligns closely with the 9–12 Wellness standard.
Civic, Financial and Economic Literacy	Use knowledge of government and economic systems to defend civic choices; develop sustainable plans using saving and asset-management skills.	Pathway 3 (Agency & Opportunity): "Career Curiosity Boards" (G12) and "Now Hiring: Future You" (G12).	Limited	Career exploration and civic-style community practices appear, but there is no government/economics instruction and no financial planning content.
Digital Literacy	Engage with people and ideas using technology safely and ethically; investigate/evaluate digital sources and use technology to create and collaborate.	Pathway 2 (Confidence & Capability): "View, Analyze, Believe" (G9) and "Balancing Online Time" (G11). Pathway 3 (Agency & Opportunity): "Understanding Your Feed" (G11). Pathway 4 (Well-Being & Community): "What Would You Do?" (G9) and "Photo Perspectives" (G11).	Moderate	This band offers the programs' strongest digital literacy content—media literacy, algorithmic awareness, and digital footprint—though safe/ethical creation and source evaluation are partial.

Grade Band 9–12

Utah Competency	Utah Grade-Band Expectation	Aligned Second Step® Content (Units and Sample Lessons)	Alignment	How Second Step® Content Supports the Competency
Communication	Develop and initiate communication through varied modalities; interpret meaning, adapt responses, and apply understanding in relevant contexts.	Pathway 1 (Belonging & Connection): "Empathy Interviews" (G12). Pathway 2 (Confidence & Capability): "Professional Problem-Solving" (G11) and "Name Your Brand" (G12). Pathway 3 (Agency & Opportunity): "Now Hiring: Future You" (G12). Pathway 4 (Well-Being & Community): "Memories from Past and Future" (G10).	Strong	Career- and connection-focused activities develop professional and interpersonal communication; multi-modal, audience-adapted communication is partially covered.
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Analyze and synthesize multiple perspectives and cite reliable evidence; evaluate and defend thinking and create viable solutions to complex problems.	Pathway 1 (Belonging & Connection): "Imaginary Audience" (G9) and "Making Assumptions" (G12). Pathway 2 (Confidence & Capability): "Time Management Hackathon" (G10), "Professional Problem-Solving" (G11), and "Addressing Self-Sabotage" (G11). Pathway 3 (Agency & Opportunity): "Computational Thinking for Problem-Solving" (G10).	Strong	Applied problem-solving and obstacle analysis support the standard; rigorous evidence-citation and multi-perspective synthesis of complex issues are less explicit.
Creativity and Innovation	Collaboratively complete vision-inspired, user-focused design/innovation projects; identify a problem, produce original work, and test and revise.	Pathway 2 (Confidence & Capability): "Time Management Hackathon" (G10) and "Name Your Brand" (G12). Pathway 3 (Agency & Opportunity): "Exploring Experiences" (G9), "Computational Thinking for Problem-Solving" (G10), "Let Me Teach You Something" (G10), "Time for a Passion Project" (G11), and "Career Curiosity Boards" (G12).	Strong	Passion projects and applied problem-solving provide the program's clearest creativity/innovation alignment, though formal design-process iteration is limited.

Grade Band 9–12

Utah Competency	Utah Grade-Band Expectation	Aligned Second Step® Content (Units and Sample Lessons)	Alignment	How Second Step® Content Supports the Competency
Collaboration and Teamwork	Contribute to and work effectively in teams, adapt to roles, and create shared responsibility that values each member's contributions.	Pathway 1 (Belonging & Connection): "Thoughtful Focus" (G9) and "Stand Up" (G11). Pathway 2 (Confidence & Capability): "Balancing Online Time" (G11). Pathway 3 (Agency & Opportunity): "Identifying Shared Strengths" (G10), "Strengths Mapping" (G11), and "Collective Contributions" (G12). Pathway 4 (Well-Being & Community): "Identifying and Managing Emotions" (G11).	Strong	Strengths-based group work and peer collaboration build shared responsibility and valuing contributions, covering much of the standard.
Honesty, Integrity and Responsibility	Display empathy while making decisions, be accountable, and consider implications; follow through on commitments that positively impact peers and community.	Pathway 1 (Belonging & Connection): "Digital Cooperative Learning" (G9–12), "Repairing Relationships" (G11), and "Making Assumptions" (G12). Pathway 3 (Agency & Opportunity): "Digital Wellness Campaign" (G9–12).	Strong	Responsible decision-making, relationship repair, and considering impact recur throughout, matching the Integrity and Responsibility strands.
Hard Work and Resilience	Design, implement, monitor, and adjust measurable, multi-step goals; engage in "productive struggle" with consistent interest, persistent effort, and self-efficacy.	Pathway 2 (Confidence & Capability): "Visualizing Success" (G9), "Identifying Obstacles" (G9), "Anticipating Obstacles" (G10), "Addressing Self-Sabotage" (G11), and "Staying Positive and Confident" (G12).	Strong	An entire pathway is devoted to efficacy, obstacle navigation, and persistence, mapping directly to the 9–12 Resilience standard.
Lifelong Learning and Personal Growth	Demonstrate personal growth through setting, monitoring, and achieving goals to pursue knowledge, skills, and values across settings.	Pathway 3 (Agency & Opportunity): "Exploring Experiences" (G9), "Time for a Passion Project" (G11), and "Career Curiosity Boards" (G12). Pathway 2 (Confidence & Capability): "Expanding Networks for Success" (G12).	Strong	Interest exploration, self-directed projects, and forward-looking goal-setting strongly cultivate lifelong learning and personal growth.

Grade Band 9–12

Utah Competency	Utah Grade-Band Expectation	Aligned Second Step® Content (Units and Sample Lessons)	Alignment	How Second Step® Content Supports the Competency
Service	Show empathy by seeking informal and formal service opportunities; engage civically in local and global communities, addressing recognized needs.	Pathway 4 (Well-Being & Community): "Kind Notes and Shout-Outs" and "Caught Doing Something Good" (schoolwide practices) and "Showing Gratitude" (G10). Pathway 1 (Belonging & Connection): "Empathy Interviews" (G12).	Moderate	Strong community-contribution and kindness practices support the empathy basis of service; explicit local/global civic service is lighter.
Respect	Apply self-respect by expressing one's own group values; generate and use adaptive strategies independently to recognize, support, and advocate for others' rights.	Pathway 1 (Belonging & Connection): "Repairing Relationships" (G11) and "Making Assumptions" (G12). Pathway 4 (Well-Being & Community): "What's Normal?" (G11).	Strong	Belonging, perspective-taking, and avoiding assumptions cultivate respect for self and a diverse community, matching the standard.

Summary: Strengths and Gaps

Where Second Step® Programs Provide Strong, Direct Support (K–12)

- Wellness: Emotion identification and regulation, stress management, self-advocacy, and self-compassion run through every grade band.
- Hard Work and Resilience: Growth mindset, goal-setting, obstacle navigation, motivation, and self-efficacy are a backbone of the program; the Grade 8 motivation lessons (success expectation, value, and cost) are an especially precise match.
- Honesty, Integrity and Responsibility: Empathy, accountability, making amends, and principle/values-based decision-making are taught explicitly across grades.
- Respect: Self-regulation, perspective-taking, respectful communication, and belonging develop respect for self and others throughout.
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving: The K–5 problem-solving and STEP routines and the 6–8 conflict-resolution process give students a repeatable, evidence- and perspective-based decision framework. Grades 9–12 build strongly on that foundation.

Where Alignment Grows Over Time

- Communication strengthens from reading nonverbal cues (K–2) to explicit respectful, audience-aware communication in the 6–8 conflict units. Grades 9–12 offer multiple activities and practices for students to apply and strengthen communication skills.
- Lifelong Learning and Personal Growth deepens from “improvement through practice” (K–2) into self-concept, agency, and self-directed goal work (6–8 and high school).
- Digital Literacy and Creativity and Innovation are minimal in the elementary and middle bands but reach Strong alignment in high school through media literacy, algorithmic awareness, digital footprint, and passion projects.

Gaps to Supplement

Second Step programs are not designed to teach the knowledge-based competencies, so the following should be addressed with other resources: Academic Mastery (Second Step programs support the dispositions for academic success but not disciplinary content), Civic, Financial and Economic Literacy (no government/economics or financial planning instruction), and Digital Literacy at K–8 (no dedicated digital citizenship lessons until high school). Service is partially supported through empathy and kindness, but structured, sustained community service—especially the local/global civic service named at 9–12—would benefit from a complementary service-learning program.

Sources

- Utah State Board of Education. Utah Portrait of a Graduate Competencies (by grade level, pp. 21–32). © 2020 Utah State Board of Education.
- Committee for Children. Second Step® Digital Programs Full Scope and Sequence for Kindergarten–Grade 12 (© 2025; SecondStep.org).

Note: Second Step® is a registered trademark of Committee for Children. Lesson titles and numbers are drawn directly from the 2025 Scope and Sequence and are provided as representative examples; some competencies are supported by additional lessons beyond those listed.