2025 School Data Amendments Report: Utah's Student Information Systems

Utah State Board of Education

September 2025

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Executive Summary

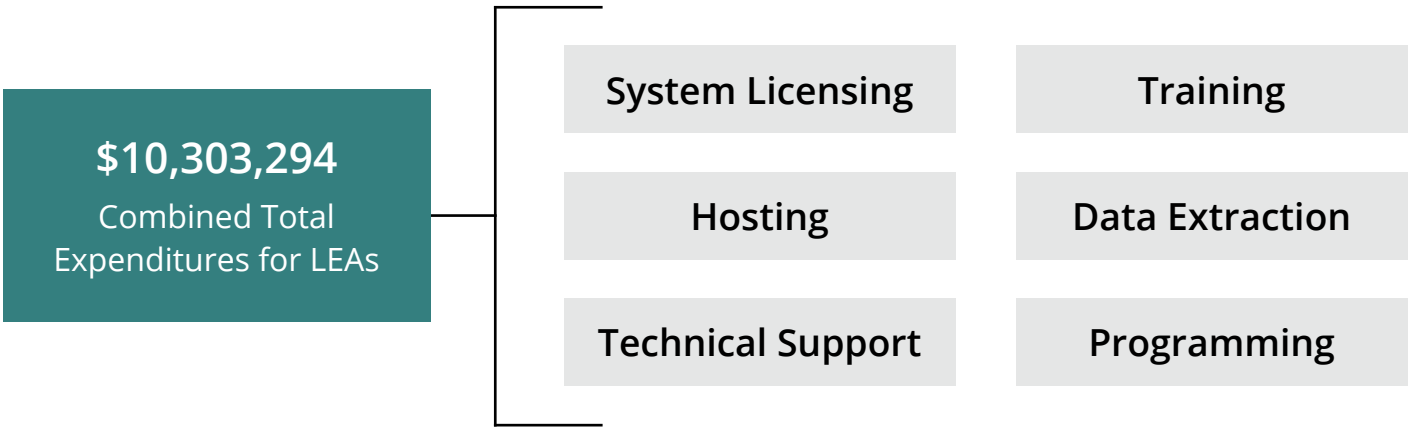
Scope, Objective and Methodology

This report was prepared in accordance with Utah Code § 53E-3-526 to examine student information systems (SIS) used by local education agencies (LEAs) in Utah. The study's objectives were to assess current LEA SIS expenditures, review system capabilities and limitations, and explore solutions. The study was conducted from May to September 2025 by the Utah State Board of Education (USBE).

The methodology included a Qualtrics survey of LEA SIS managers, which achieved a response rate of 87.3% (138 out of 158 LEAs).

The survey gathered data on:

Following the survey, 30 qualitative data validation interviews were conducted with a diverse group of LEA SIS managers to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the self-reported data.



Conclusions

The total combined estimated annual expenditure for SIS-related costs reported by LEAs was $10,303,294. This figure includes costs for system licensing, hosting, technical support, training, data extraction, and programming. The reported average annual cost per student was $15.37, a significant increase from previous estimates, likely due to the inclusion of more comprehensive in-house and third-party costs. Interviews and surveys also highlighted a number of critical limitations in the current SIS landscape.

Recommendation

The Data Systems and Reporting Advisory Committee (DSRAC) voted to recommend an "LEA Vendor Choice with USBE Support" option. This option increases requirements on vendors to become approved to increase accountability, but maintains local choice. This plan also increases the USBE staff to support addressing systematic data issues.

Report Objective and Scope

Utah Code § 53E-3-526 requires the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) to study three topics in education data, make recommendations, and establish an advisory committee. The first topic examines student information systems (SIS). This law took effect on May 7, 2025 and the findings for this portion were required to be submitted to the legislature by September 15, 2025.

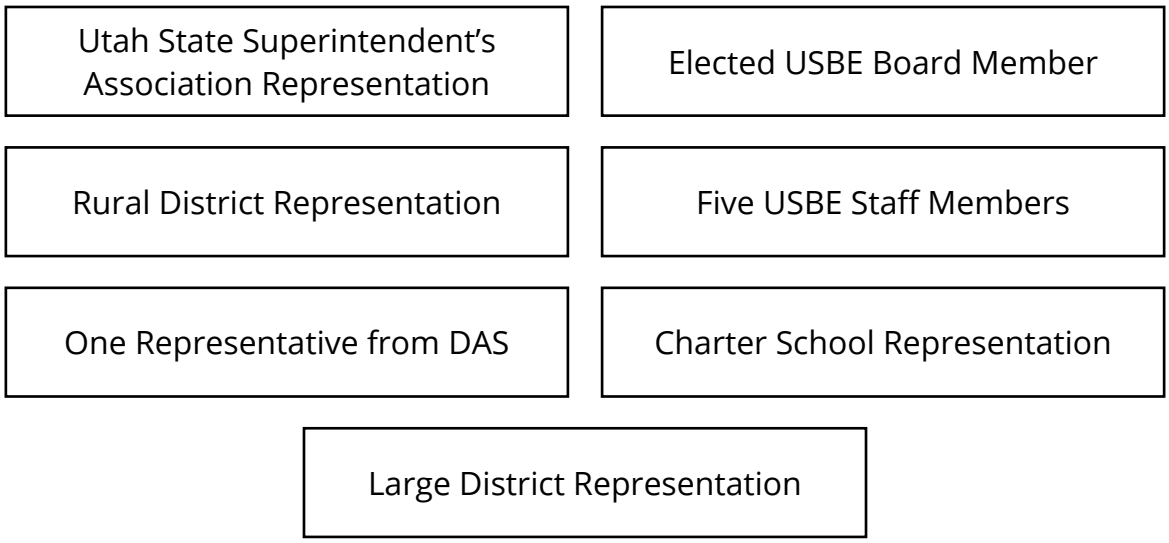
The committee was required to ensure the study of SIS examined current local education agencies' (LEAs') SIS expenses, capabilities and limitations of the current SIS landscape, examples of statewide SIS solutions in other states and provide solutions. The report was also required to include stakeholder input, fiscal impacts and implementation considerations.

The Data System and Reporting Advisory Committee

In accordance with Utah Code and under the guidance of Utah State Board of Education Board leadership, the Data Systems and Reporting Advisory Committee was formed with a variety of required stakeholders, however all individuals with relevant interest and experience were invited to apply. Information and applications were emailed to subscribers on electronic mailing lists of LEA staff in May. A panel of USBE staff reviewed and ranked all applications received. Members were selected based on their relevant experience and to ensure varied representation. The committee was finalized at the end of May and held its first meeting in early June.

The committee convened nine times for a total of 16.5 hours between June 3, 2025 and September 15, 2025. The dedication of the committee members is particularly noteworthy, as these meetings were scheduled during summer months and increased in frequency as the new school year began.

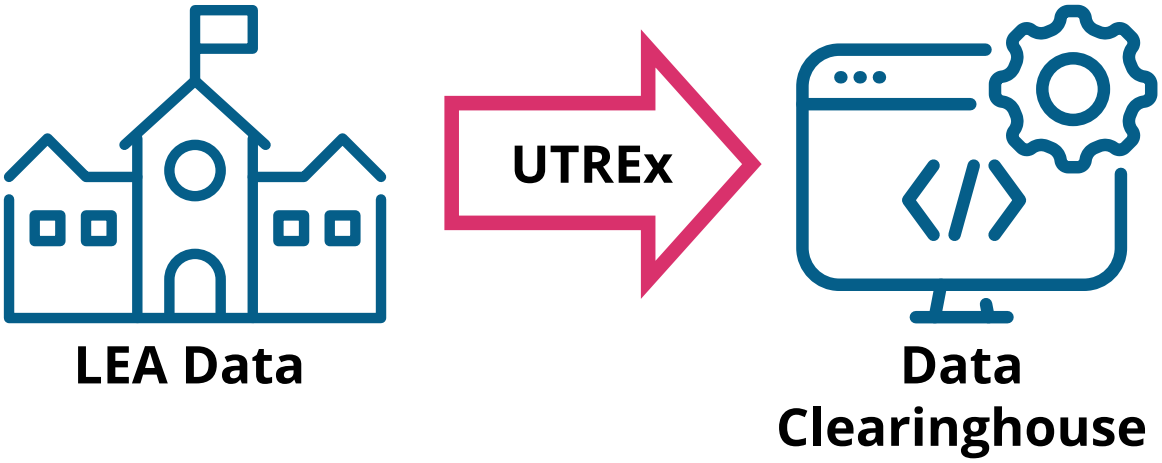
The committee has a total of 24 members. There are 15 members currently working in LEAs. Of these members there is a mix of urban, rural and charter LEAs represented. Four of Utah's six largest school districts—Davis, Jordan, Nebo, and Washington County—are represented on the committee. One committee member is an elected USBE board member, five are USBE staff members, and one is a representative from the Department of Administrative Services. A full list of the membership can be found in Appendix A.



Background of the Current Education Data Landscape

The Data Responsibilities of the USBE

The Utah Constitution established a public education system open to all children in the state. As part of this system, the state legislature has outlined in Utah Code § 53E-5-202 a School Accountability System, which requires annual data collection and reporting from schools across the state. These annual reports include indicators for elementary, middle, and high schools such as academic performance, equitable educational opportunity, graduation rate, and postsecondary readiness.



To report these indicators and support public education, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction has responsibilities outlined in Utah Code § 53E-3-301, which include "collecting and organizing education data into an automated decision support system to facilitate school district and school improvement planning, accountability reporting, performance recognition, and the evaluation of educational policy and program effectiveness…" These data must be comparable across LEAs, comprehensive under laws and state board rules (rules), and enable users to draw statistically valid conclusions. To help achieve this the State Superintendent of Public Instruction works to "collaborate with school districts and charter schools in designing and implementing uniform data standards and definitions".

Currently the USBE maintains the Utah eTranscript and Record Exchange (UTREx), a system through which student records are exchanged from LEAs to the USBE electronically. UTREx also facilitates the electronic transfer of transcripts to postsecondary institutions with eTranscript capabilities. The UTREx system is in the process of being replaced by Utah Schools Information Management System (USIMS).

LEAs submit their data through UTREx. Some data collections are then stored into a data warehouse called the Data Clearinghouse. This includes school performance reports, submissions to the U.S. Department of Education, and demographic information about schools and LEAs.

The Data Responsibilities of LEAs

LEAs have their own responsibilities within Utah's education data collection landscape. They must maintain their own systems for collecting and storing student data that are then submitted

to the USBE. These systems are called student information systems (SIS). They primarily manage and store data but also serve as a central platform for grades, scheduling, enrollment, attendance, and more.

LEAs are required by Rule R277-484 to submit nightly updates and submissions through UTREx to the Data Clearinghouse. Finalized UTREx submissions must be completed on October 1, December 1 and at Year-End.

To assist LEAs in understanding what information and formats are required for submission, there is a main source of information called the UTREx Specifications Manual. This document is maintained and updated with specific information about the data that must be submitted. Any changes to data requirements for LEAs are documented and updated in this manual, which is used by LEA SIS managers and SIS vendors to ensure that changes are appropriately reflected in the various SIS.

There are currently eight different SIS being used by LEAs in Utah. These include a USBE-provided system (Aspire), two home-grown systems (Davis and Sevier) and five commercially available systems.

USBE: Aspire	**Skyward**
Davis System	**Infinite Campus**
Sevier System	**Compass**
PowerSchool	**Focus**

At the school level, an SIS is essential for a wide range of daily operations, extending beyond just state reporting. School staff continuously use their SIS to input data that is uploaded nightly to the Data Clearinghouse via UTREX. Teachers input grades, secretaries manage attendance, and cafeteria staff record lunch information. These systems also facilitate crucial administrative tasks like student enrollment and store important records like health and parent consent forms. Additionally, many SIS integrate with other platforms to manage Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), track student behavior, facilitate school fees and communicate with parents.

Previous Studies of Education Data

USBE Internal Audit Reports

The USBE's Internal Audit team is committed to an independent and objective analysis of education for Utahns. They have the authority to audit entities governed by or provided resources by the USBE and operate independently from daily operations of the USBE. Under the approval of the USBE, the Internal Audit team has performed a number of audits regarding education data.

Data Reliability Audits

Most relevant to this study was a two-part, 2022 report published on Data Reliability (Data Reliability, Assessment Data (22-01-A), Data Reliability Audit – Graduation and Student Data (22-01-B). One part was focused on student assessment data and the other part on graduation and other student data. This study found a number of data issues related to data reliability, data validity, and data governance.

The audit identified issues related to data governance. Internal auditors reported a lack of capable personnel at the USBE to support LEAs with their data needs. In addition to the need for more USBE employees, the audit noted unclear and inconsistent communication from the USBE to LEAs and individuals. It further found that LEAs showed inconsistent compliance with Utah Code and often lacked formal policies governing education data.

Attendance Audit

The USBE's Internal Audit team conducted an Attendance Audit in 2025 (Attendance Audit 25-01). This audit found that the public education system was "rife with inconsistency, contradiction, confusion, and noncompliance" related to attendance. Related to data this audit made recommendations for the USBE to:

- Review and update the Data Clearinghouse File Specification manual to ensure codes align with law, ensure codes are not confusing, codes that may only be used by one entity are restricted to that entity, and remove obsolete language,
- Enact corrective actions for LEAs submitting data with errors that are not being addressed in a timely manner, and
- Engage with LEAs regarding the importance of accurate records, exiting and enrolling students in a timely manner with accurate coding.

One Statewide SIS Focus Groups

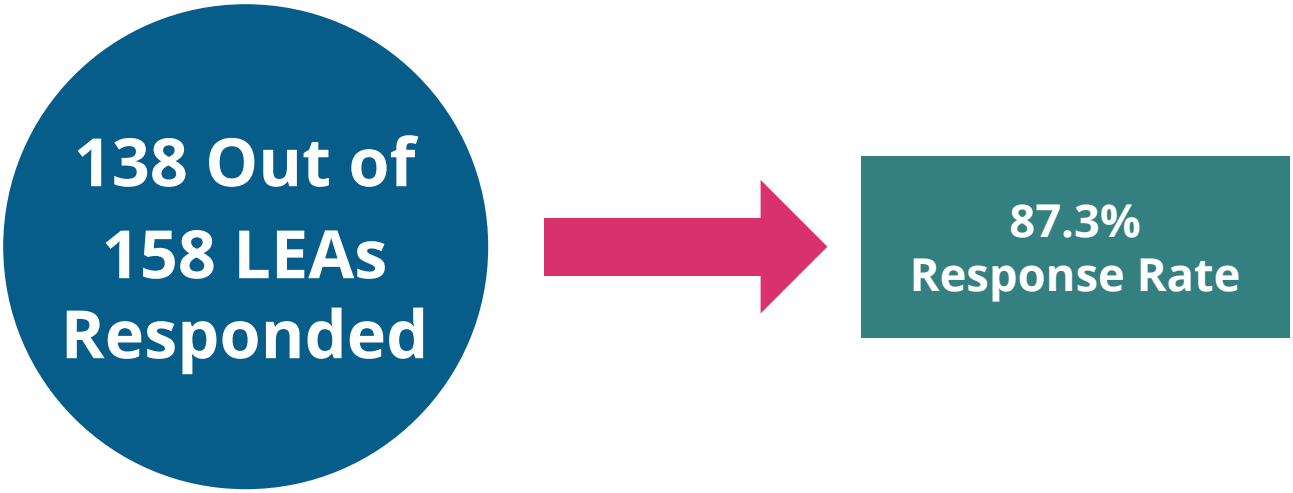
In 2024, at the request of the USBE, USBE staff ran focus groups to engage a number of stakeholders on the question of a single statewide SIS. There were six focus groups, one for each of the following stakeholders: parents, teachers, human resource and business administrators, LEA SIS administrators, LEA leaders including superintendents and charter school directors, and technology leaders. These groups were asked about their support levels for having one statewide SIS. They were also asked about top benefits, factors that would be critical for success, and their preferred purchase model. The full results of these focus groups can be found in Appendix B.

Qualtrics LEA SIS Managers Survey and Interviews

Summary

To determine the current costs of SIS within Utah's LEAs, a multi-pronged data collection approach was used. A Qualtrics survey was distributed to LEAs after being introduced during a monthly meeting of LEA SIS managers. LEA SIS managers are those responsible for managing their respective SIS. Following initial feedback from this group, the survey was formally emailed out with the LEA recommended submission timeline.

138 LEAs out of Utah's 158 total LEAs responded for a response rate of 87.3%.



In addition to the survey, the Data Systems and Reporting Advisory Committee requested follow-up data validation interviews. These qualitative interviews were conducted by the USBE staff to ensure the reliability of the data collected and gain additional insights.

Data Gathering Methods

Qualtrics Survey

To gather the most accurate information, the USBE used a self-report with a Qualtrics survey as the primary tool. The survey was directed to those most familiar with SIS operations within each LEA, ensuring responses came from individuals best positioned to provide accurate details.

The survey was introduced at a monthly meeting of LEA Data managers, where the USBE staff worked with LEA staff to establish an appropriate submission timeline. The survey was distributed in May 2025. Throughout this process, the USBE staff provided direct support to LEA SIS managers, helping ensure that responses were accurate, consistent, and reliable.

The breakdown of the 138 survey respondents by their SIS vendor is as follows: Aspire was used by 84 LEAs, PowerSchool by 31, Skyward by 7, and Infinite Campus and Compass were each used by 5 LEAs.

The survey was organized into four main sections to align with the specifications outlined in Utah Code § 53E-3-526. These sections were: Annual Expenditures, Annual Staff Time, SIS Modifications, and SIS Satisfaction.

Data Validation Interviews

Following the Qualtrics survey, the Data Systems and Reporting Advisory Committee requested follow-up data validation interviews. These interviews, conducted by the USBE staff, were initiated to gain further insight into how respondents arrived at their survey answers, especially for categories like Staff Time and System Modifications, which are metrics that many LEAs do not typically track.

The Data Systems and Reporting Advisory Committee (DSRAC) requested that interviews include a diverse group of LEAs, including those using various SIS vendors. A total of 30 data validation interviews were conducted between July 7th and 31st. LEAs were randomly selected from the vendor lists, with a representative number of each vendor selected and a mix of charter and districts invited to participate.

The interviews, conducted via Zoom, were recorded, transcribed, and then deleted. Responses were coded, and data were analyzed, with certain quotes being selected for inclusion in this report. The duration of these interviews had an average length of 34 minutes.

Of the 30 LEAs that were interviewed, 14 LEAs were charter schools and 16 were districts. The 16 districts represent 571 of Utah's schools. There are a total of 137 charter schools in Utah and a total of 41 districts representing 1,106 schools. The interview pool consisted of 11 LEAs using PowerSchool, 8 LEAs using Aspire, 4 LEAs using Skyward, 2 LEAs using Infinite Campus, 3 LEAs using Compass, 1 LEA using Focus and 1 LEA using Davis.

The table below compares the vendors used by LEAs interviewed for the data validation surveys and the vendors used by LEAs during the 2023-2024 school year.

SIS Vendor	LEAs using SIS in 2023-2024 SY	Number Intervied for Data Validation
Aspire	101	8
Compass	6	3
Davis	1	1
Focus	1	1
Infinite Campus	7	2
PowerSchool	33	11
Sevier	1	1
Skyward	7	4

Average Annual Expenditures Findings

The survey, which was distributed to LEA SIS managers, requested that they estimate their LEA's average annual expenses for a variety of SIS-related categories. These categories included System Modifications, Custom Programming, Data Extraction, Hosting Services, Staff Training, System Licensing, and Technical Support.

The total average annual expenditures reported by each LEA can be found in Appendix C.

The combined total of the estimated annual expenses for all categories was $10,303,294. Figure 1 details these estimated annual expenses by SIS vendor and category.

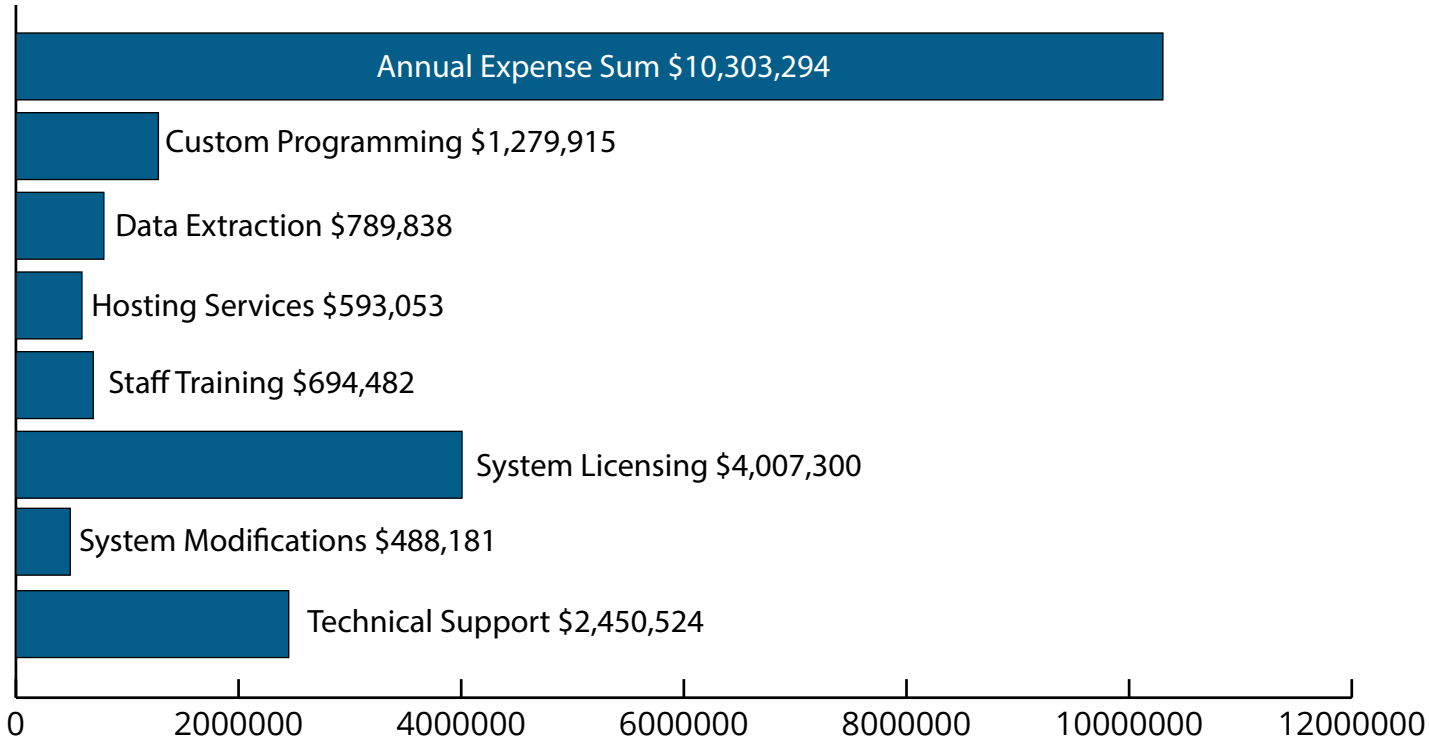


Figure 1. Estimated Annual Expenses

The data validation interviews revealed that 75% of responses included costs paid directly to their SIS vendor, while other respondents included other estimated costs. It is important to note that these figures do not represent the total costs of operating an SIS, but rather the costs associated with the listed categories. If LEAs had been asked for the total annual expenses for all functions related to their SIS, including in-house hosting, hardware, training, and staff salaries, the total estimated annual expenses would likely be significantly higher.

System Licensing Findings

In total, LEAs reported a combined average annual expenditure of $4,007,300.26 for system licensing, which accounts for 39% of the total reported average annual expenses.

System licensing typically refers to the permission to use a software or service. All respondents in the data validation interviews estimated these costs as direct payments to their respective vendors, often retrieved from vendor accounts or receipts. This is an indicator that most respondents of the survey may also have estimated these costs as direct payments to vendors

to use their product.

Approximately 27% of the data validation respondents indicated that their reported costs for system licensing included payments for “add-ons,” which are additional capabilities purchased beyond the base SIS package, typically paid to the same SIS vendor, such as an external messaging system or food services system.

The total system licensing costs by SIS vendor are shown in Figure 3. LEAs using PowerSchool reported the highest cost at $1,800,633. The lowest cost of $6,000 was reported by Sevier for their home-grown SIS.

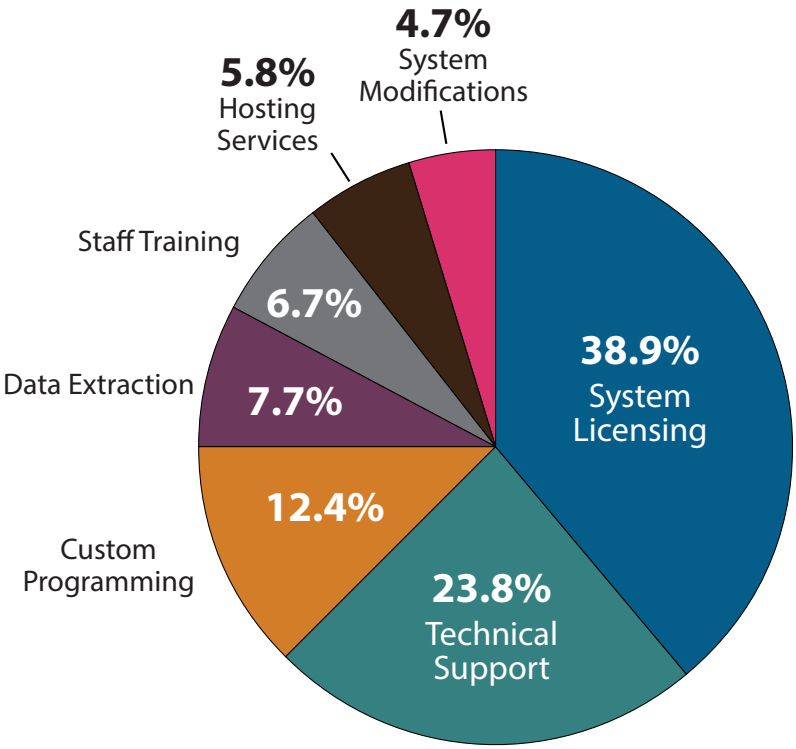


Figure 2. Estimated Annual Expenses by Category

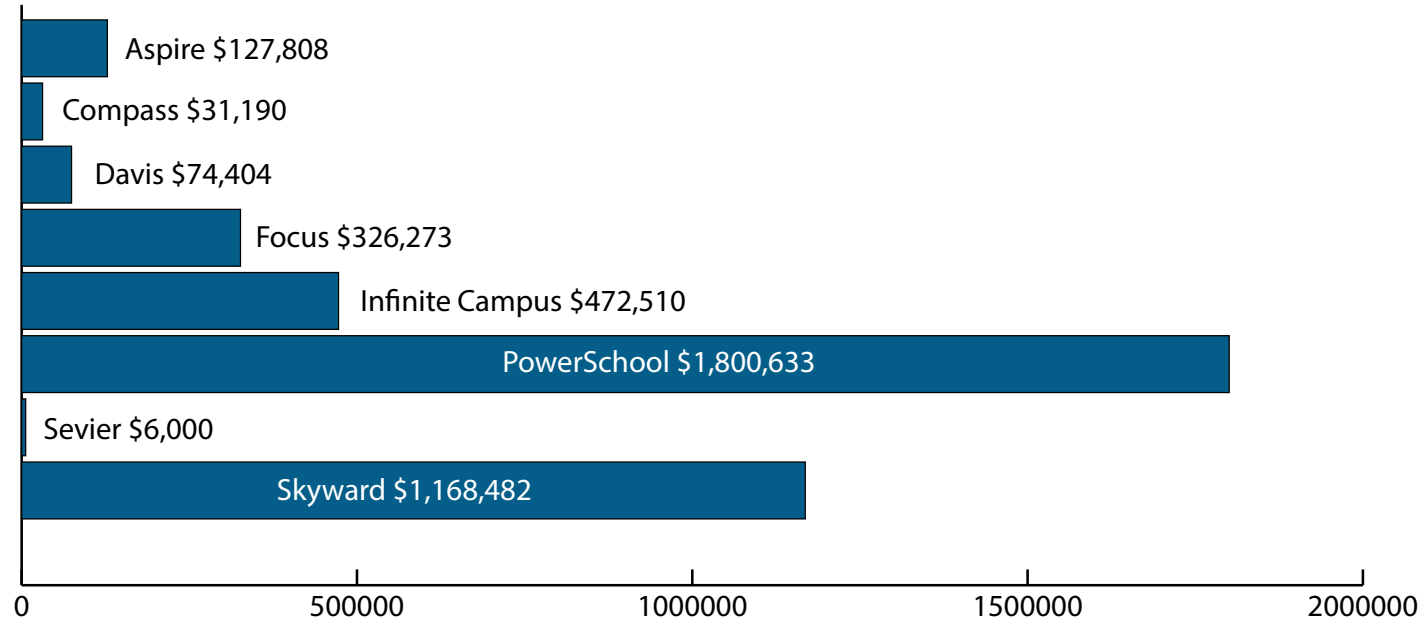


Figure 3. Estimated Annual Expenses for System Licensing by SIS Vendor

It is important to note that ten LEAs using Aspire, which does not charge for system licensing, collectively reported a system licensing cost of $127,808. In the data validation interviews, one charter school management service reviewed the results reported from schools that they managed using Aspire and noted that LEA SIS managers were likely confused by the technical language and misreporting costs. It is also likely that LEAs using Aspire could have been adding system licensing costs for 3rd party products with capabilities associated with SIS like lunch fees

management or communications platforms.

In Figure 4, the costs for per-student system licensing are shown for the different SIS Vendors. These costs were calculated by dividing the total licensing costs reported by the number of students served by each LEA. The chart shows that while one vendor, Skyward, serves the largest student population, its per-student licensing cost ranks third highest. Alternatively, LEAs using Compass serve the second smallest number of students but report the third highest per-student cost. This variance is significant because the cost structures of SISs can be based on per-pupil fees, and the student populations served by different SIS vendors in Utah vary substantially.

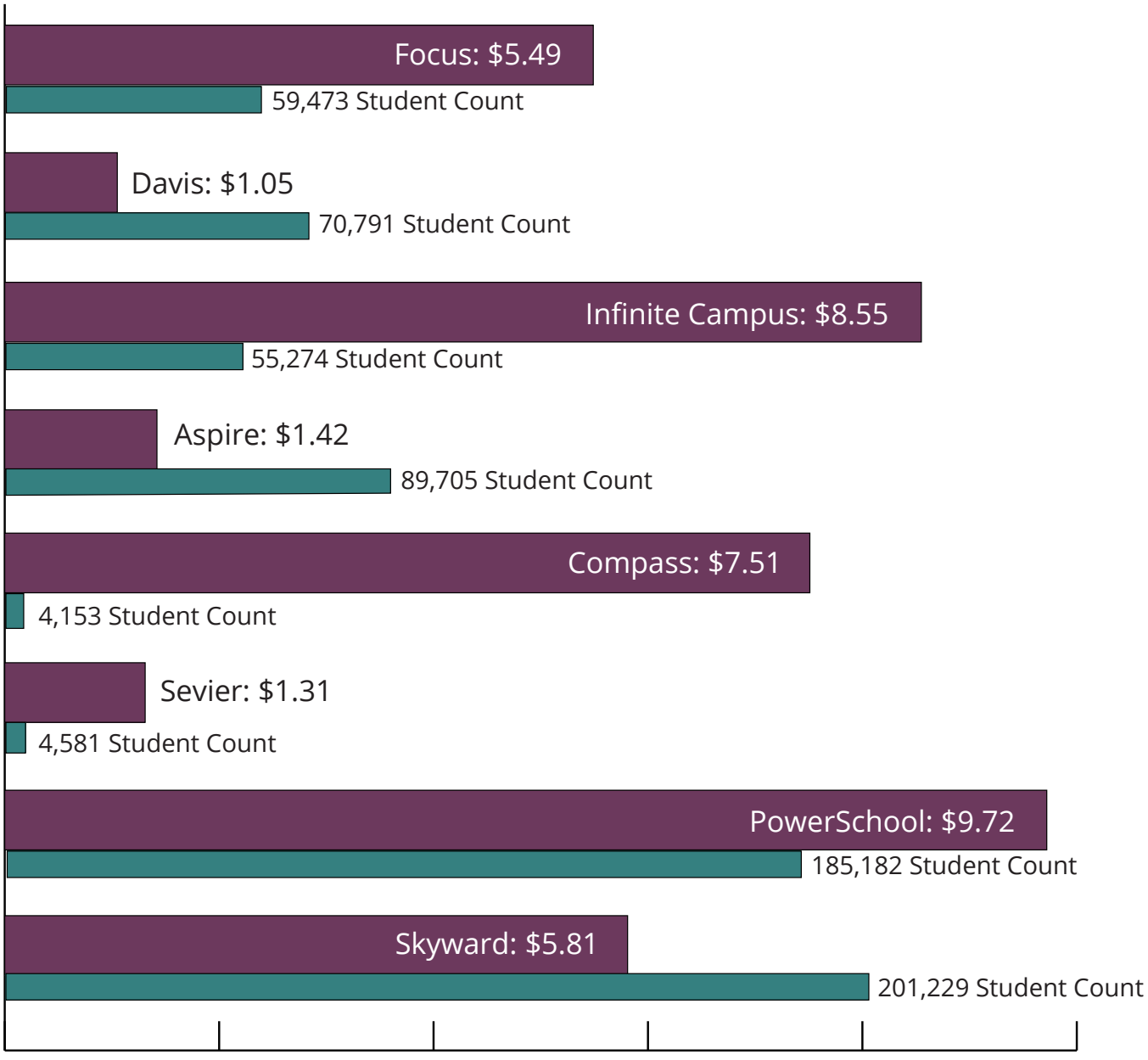
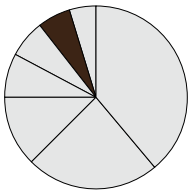


Figure 4. System Licensing Cost Per Student by SIS Vendor



Hosting Services

LEAs reported an average annual expenditure of $593,053 for hosting services, which accounts for 5.75% of the total average annual expenses reported.

Hosting refers to where the SIS infrastructure is physically housed and maintained. LEAs typically have two main options for hosting services: self-hosting or paying for hosting services from an SIS vendor or third party. Self-hosting means that the infrastructure of an SIS will be supported and located on the LEAs' property. SIS vendors and 3rd parties host on their property with their hardware and are accessible through cloud-based service. Self-hosting requires hardware like servers, network infrastructure, internet bandwidth, databases as well as additional costs for staff time.

Many LEAs choose to self-host, but some did not identify these internal costs when responding to the survey. The data validation interviews revealed that 45% of self-hosted LEAs did not report any associated costs, while the remaining 55% did estimate an in-house cost. This suggests that the total expenses for hosting services would be considerably higher if all LEAs accounted for these internal costs.

The breakdown of estimated hosting costs by SIS Vendor can be found in Figure 5.

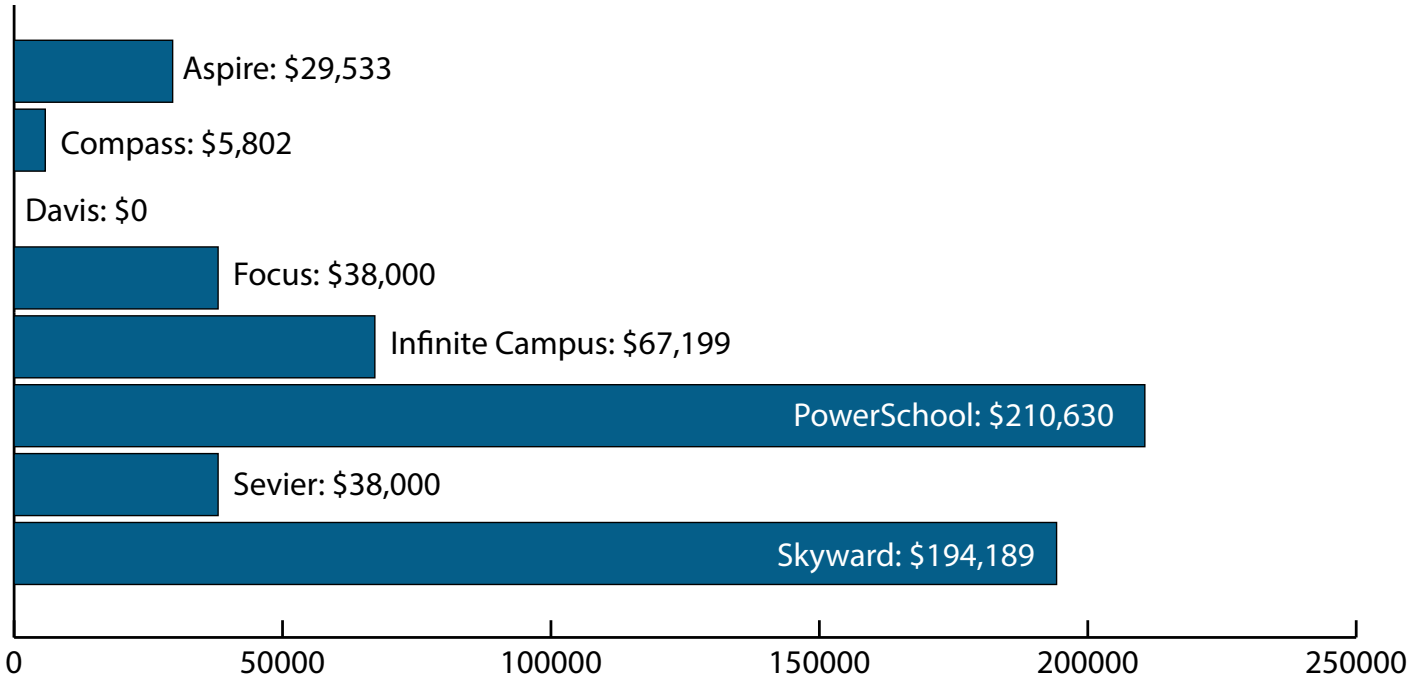


Figure 5. Estimated Annual Expenses for Hosting Services by SIS Vendor

Davis reported a cost of $0, as their hosting costs are included in their system licensing fees. It is also important to note that Compass does not support LEA self-hosting and Aspire does not charge for hosting services. However, Aspire does allow LEAs to self-host or pay a third party for hosting. One Aspire user interviewed for the data validation interviews reported a cost for hosting and IT services from a third-party vendor, Onward.

Figure 6 shows the cost of hosting services per student by vendor. The homegrown SIS from Sevier has the highest cost per student at $8.30, as their number is based on the cost for all of their hardware and support for their homegrown SIS. In comparison, Compass, Infinite Campus, PowerSchool, Skyward, and Focus all reported costs between $0.80 and $1.40 per student.

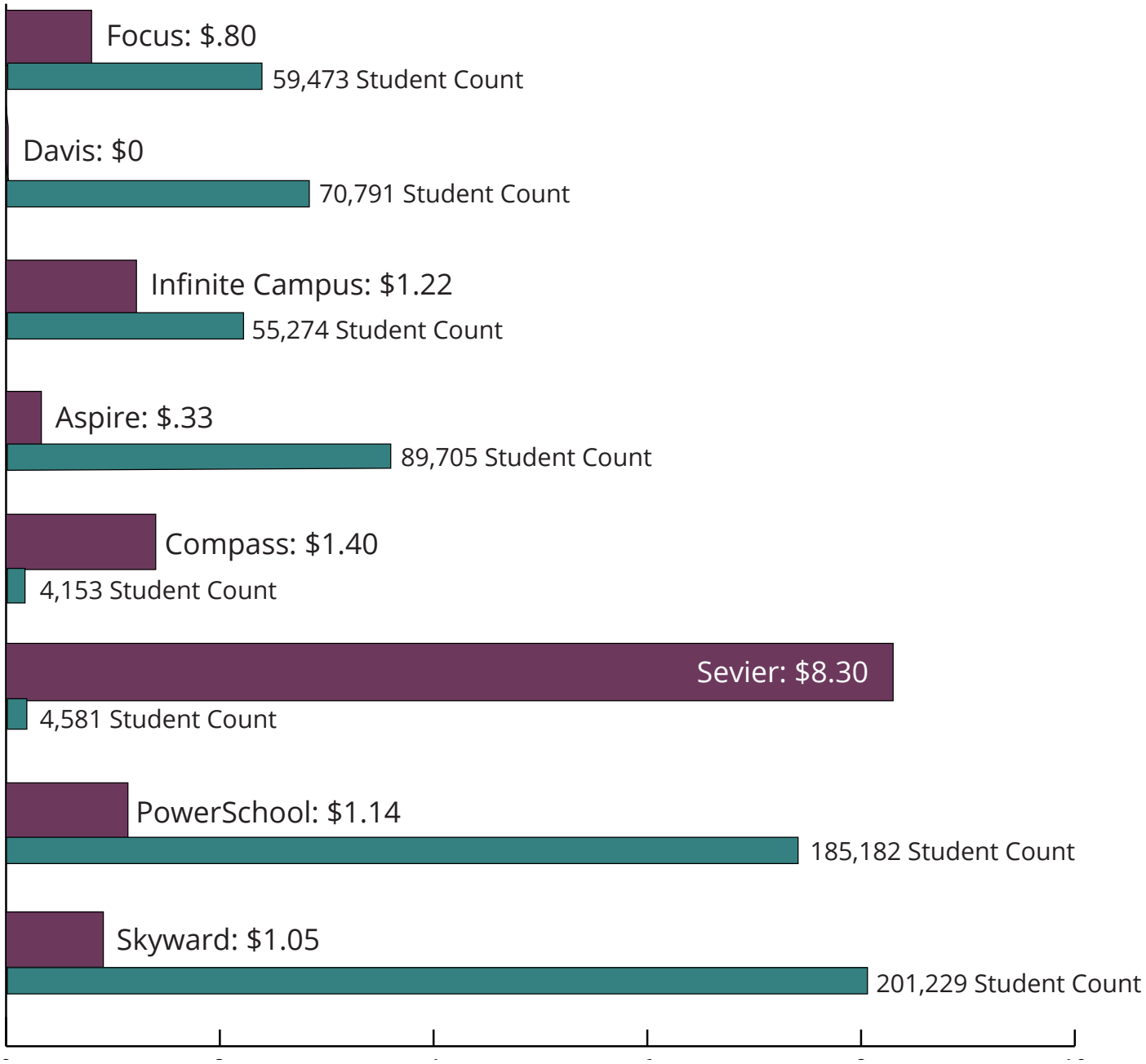
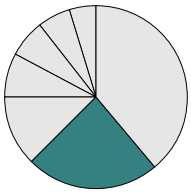


Figure 6. Hosting Services Cost Per Student by SIS Vendor



Technical Support

LEAs reported an average annual expenditure of $2,450,524 for technical support, which represents 23.8% of the total average annual expenses reported by surveyed LEAs.

According to the data validation interviews, 60% of LEAs estimated the cost paid to their SIS vendor of technical support paid directly to their SIS vendor. A further 17% attempted to estimate internal costs for technical support and help desk services, while another 17% estimated costs paid to a third-party consultant. The total estimated cost would likely be higher if all LEAs accounted for internal technical support expenses.

It is also important to note that 27.6% of interviewed LEAs stated that technical support costs were included in their system licensing fees and could not be reported separately. This was specifically mentioned by the LEA using Focus. It should also be noted that Aspire does not charge for technical support and LEAs' reporting costs could be estimating in-house or third party technical support costs.

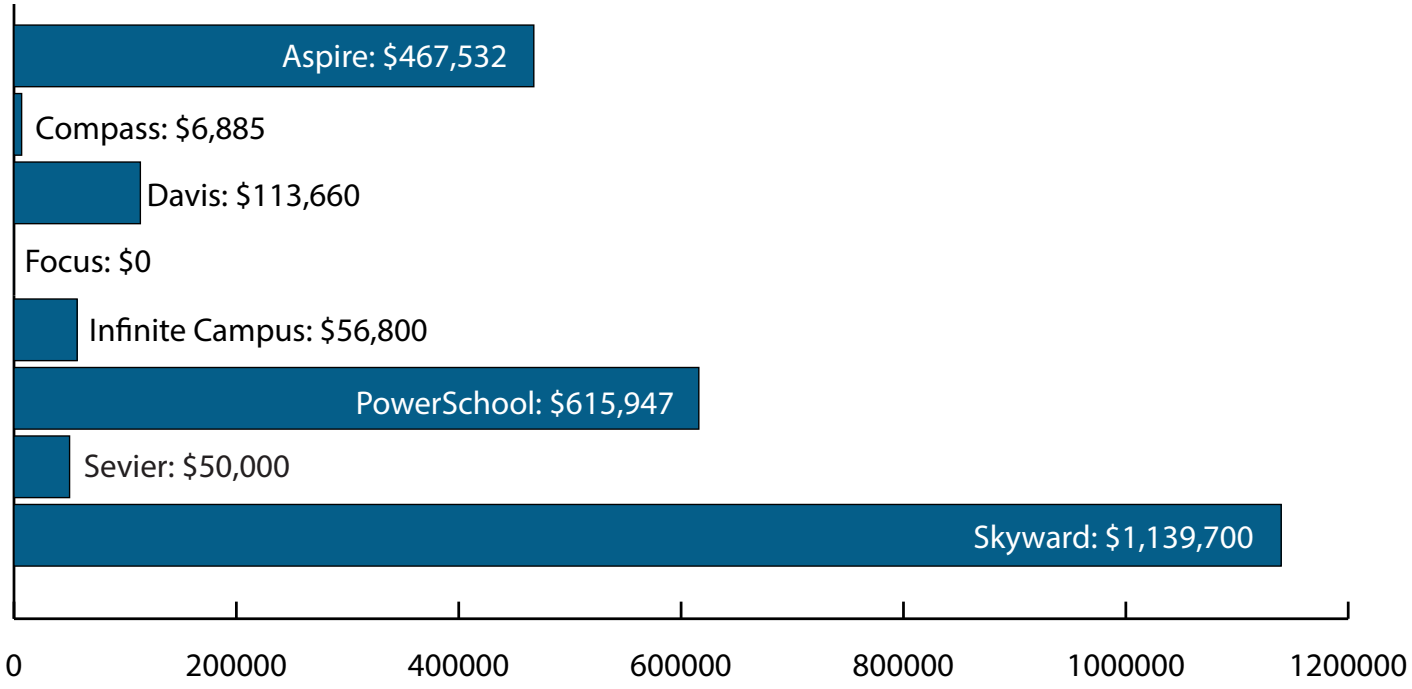


Figure 7. Estimated Annual Expenses for Technical Support by SIS Vendor

Figure 8 shows the cost of technical support per student by vendor. Based on this information, Sevier reported the highest cost per student at $10.91, followed by Skyward at $5.66 and Aspire at $5.21 per student.

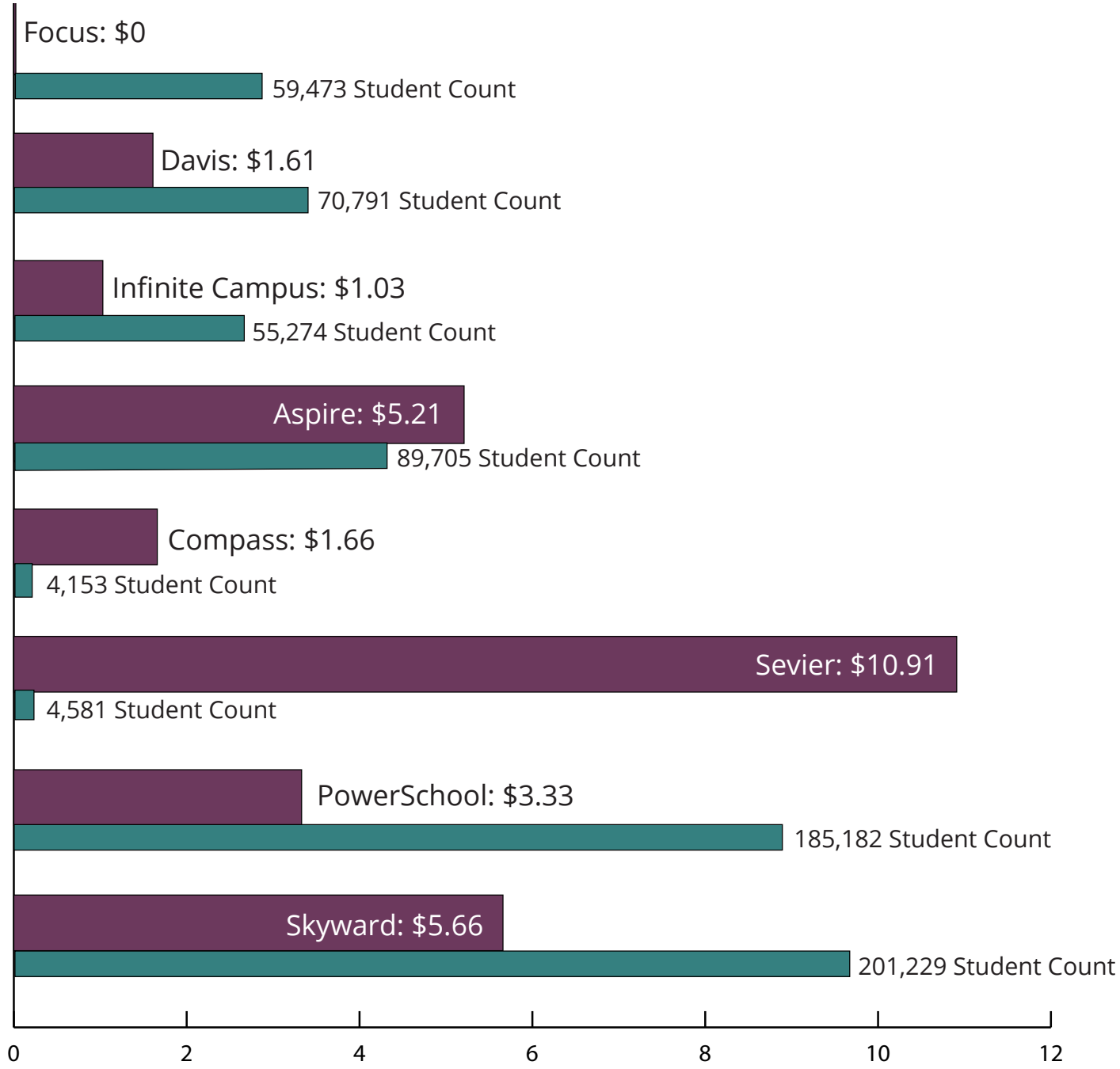
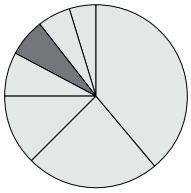


Figure 8. Technical Support Cost Per Student by SIS Vendor



Staff Training

LEAs reported an average annual expenditure of $694,482 for staff training, which accounts for 6.7% of the total average annual expenses.

Most SIS vendors offer additional training beyond what is typically included in their base packages. According to the data validation interviews, 63% of LEAs estimated the cost of training paid directly to their vendor, while 30% attempted to estimate their internal training costs, which included expenses for training office staff, teachers, support staff, and school administrators. 13% of LEAs also included the cost of staff attending SIS vendor run training conferences in their estimates. One LEA reported costs paid to a third party for training.

Figure 9 shows the estimated dollars spent towards staff training by SIS vendors. PowerSchool had the highest total annual expenses at $335,615, followed by Skyward at $231,704. Aspire was third highest at $58,278, although Aspire does not charge for staff training services, so these were likely estimates for the cost of internal staff training.

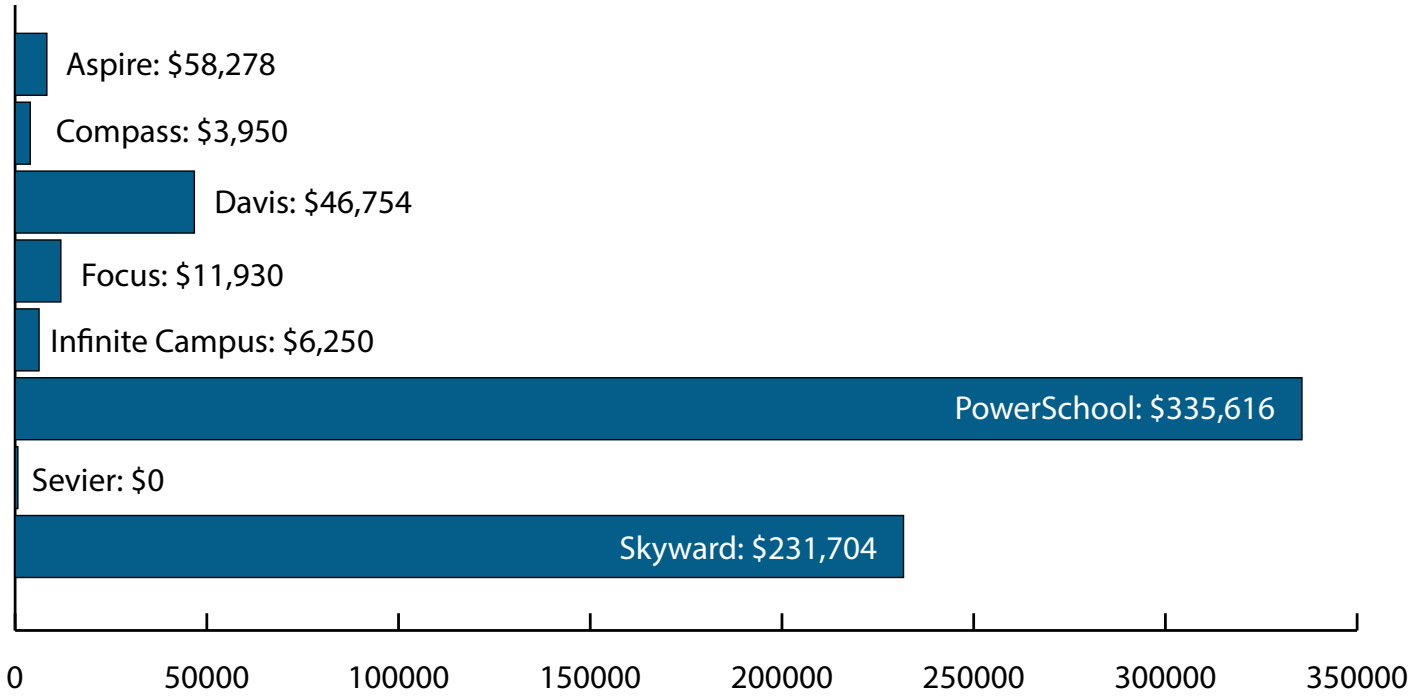


Figure 9. Estimated Annual Expenses for Staff Training by SIS Vendor

Figure 10 shows the cost of staff training per student by vendor. PowerSchool had the highest cost per student at $1.81, followed by Skyward at $1.15 and Compass at $0.95.

One charter school interviewed provided insight into PowerSchool's higher costs, noting that their estimated staff training expenses included both in-house training for new teachers and fees for PowerSchool University, a catalog of paid professional development experiences. Many SIS offer professional development conferences and charge for training.

An LEA SIS manager using Infinite Campus noted that their vendor offers "basic monthly training and support calls at no extra charge, additional in-depth training can be purchased as needed."

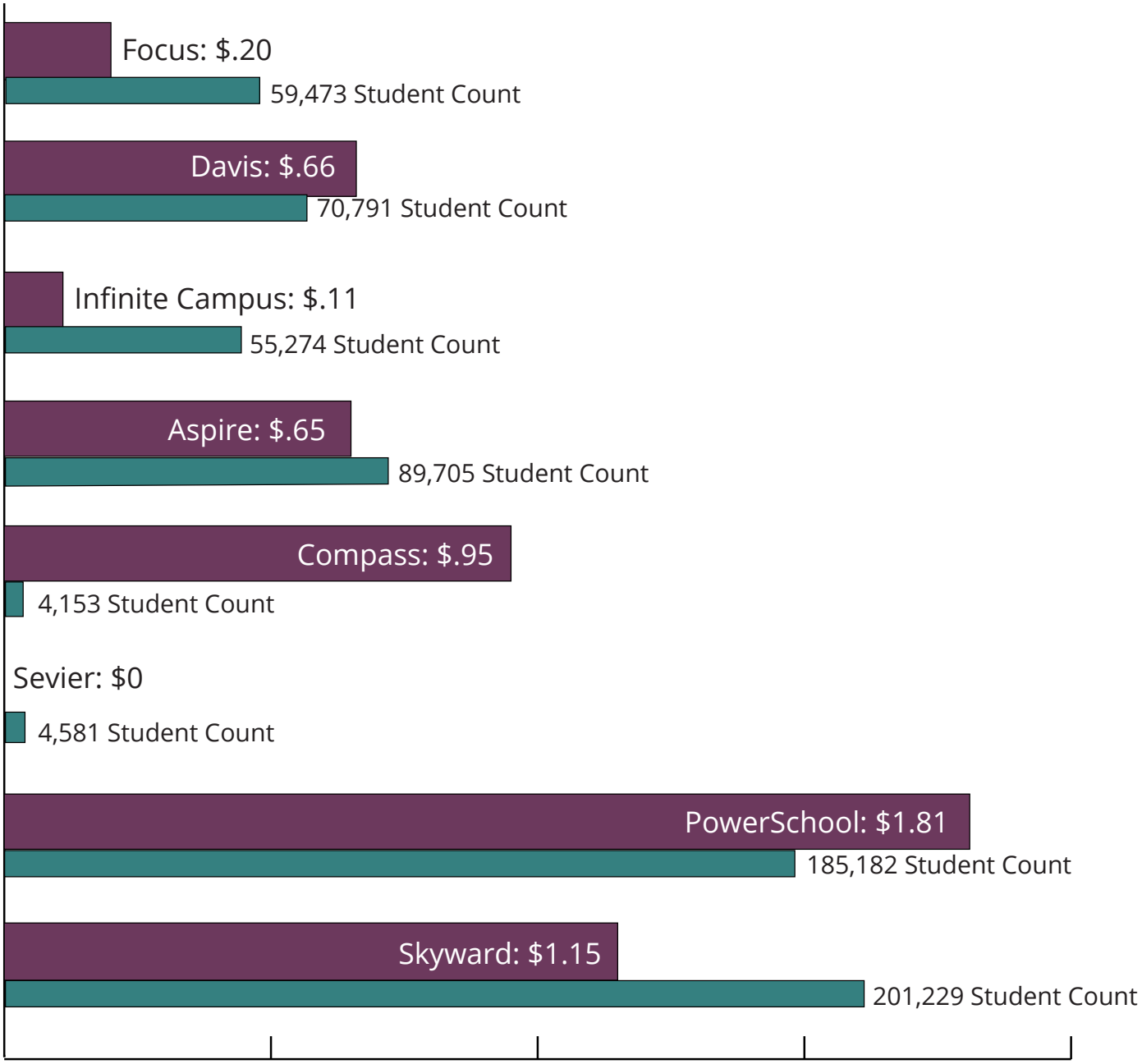
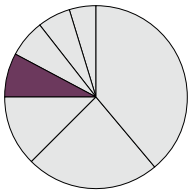


Figure 10. Staff Training Cost Per Student by SIS Vendor



Data Extraction

Data extraction typically refers to pulling data out from different sources into one dataset where it can be analyzed or reported. LEAs reported an average annual expenditure of $789,838 for data extraction, which represents 7% of the total average annual expenses reported.

Based on the data validation interviews, 53% of LEAs reported payments directly to their SIS vendor for data extraction. Conversely, 21% estimated their in-house costs, and 10% of interviewed LEAs exclusively had in-house costs but did not report them as they were only accounting for direct vendor payments. The LEAs that estimated their in-house costs included the time and salaries of their data/tech teams or LEA SIS managers.

The estimated dollars spent on data extraction by different SIS vendors are presented in Figure 11 below. It should be noted that Aspire does not charge for data extraction, so any costs reported by LEAs using this vendor may be reported estimates for in-house or third-party expenses.

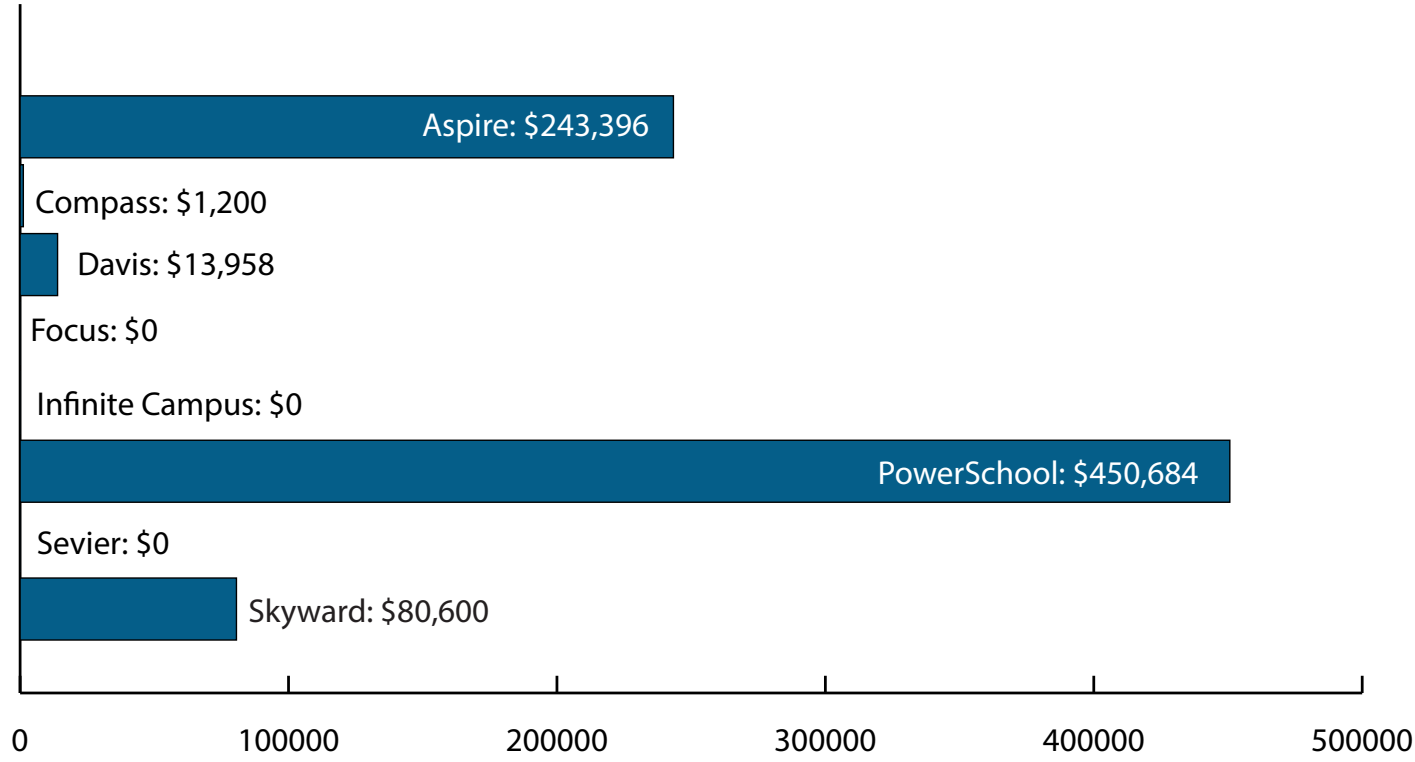


Figure 11. Estimated Annual Expenses for Data Extraction by SIS Vendor

Figure 12 shows the cost of data extraction per student by vendor. Aspire reported the highest cost per student at $2.71, followed by PowerSchool at $2.43. The LEA using Focus reported that data extraction services were a part of system licensing. In the data validation interviews, an LEA SIS manager using Infinite Campus mentioned that their payment cost breakdown is divided into system licensing, hosting services, and technical support, with no additional costs for data extraction, which may explain the $0 cost reported by Infinite Campus users.

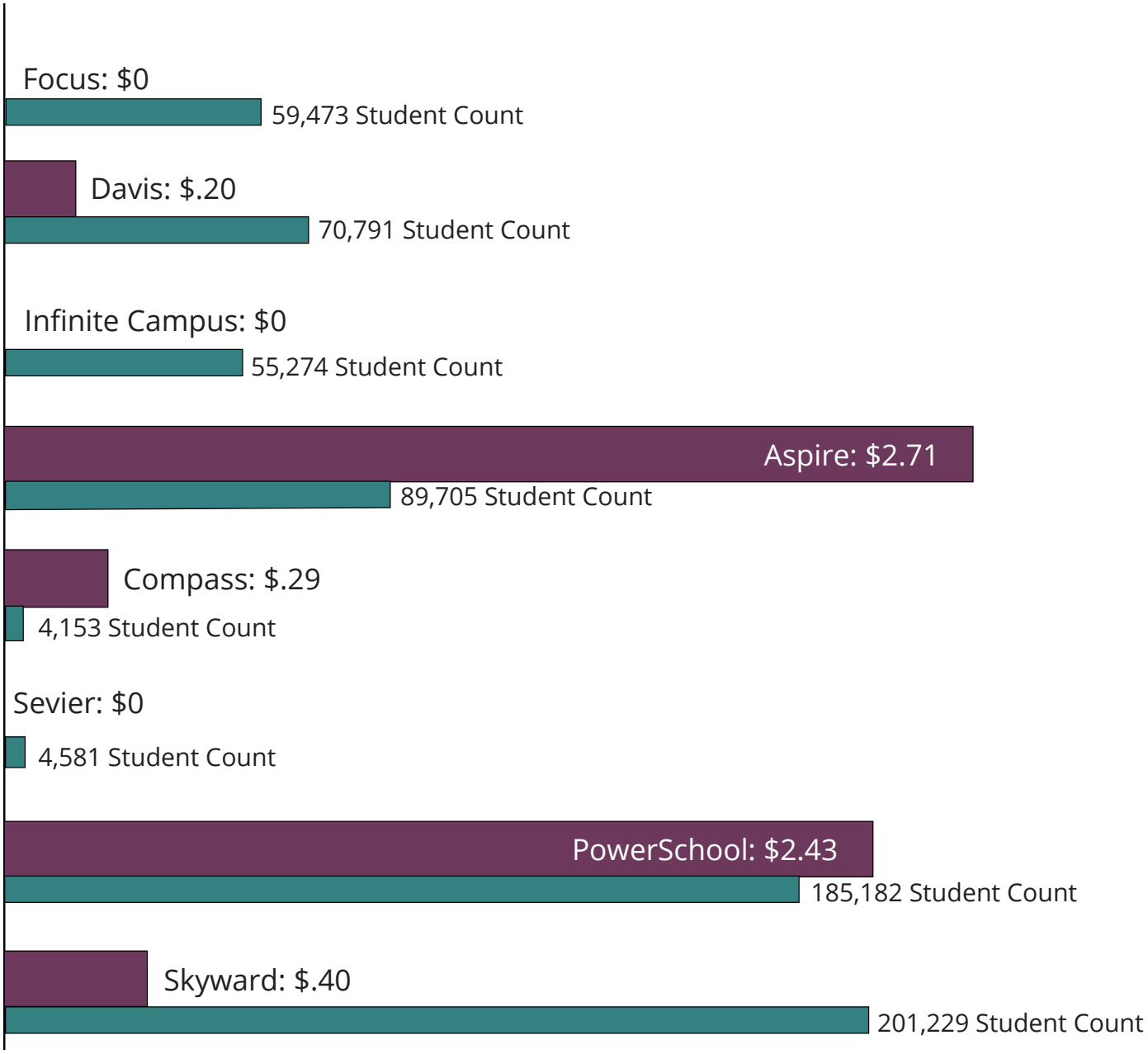
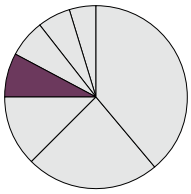


Figure 12. Data Extraction Cost Per Student by SIS Vendor



Custom Programming

The definition of custom programming can vary by vendor, ranging from LEA-requested features not currently in the vendor system to the addition of legislative requirements or reporting needs. LEAs reported an average annual expenditure of $1,279,915 for custom programming, which represents 12.8% of the total average annual expenses reported by LEAs.

Based on the data validation interviews, 55.5% of LEAs only included their payments to their vendors in their estimates, while 14.8% estimated their in-house costs for custom programming. Of LEAs interviewed, 29.6% mentioned that they had no custom programming needs and therefore no associated costs.

Below are the estimated dollars spent towards custom programming that LEAs with different SIS vendor reported.

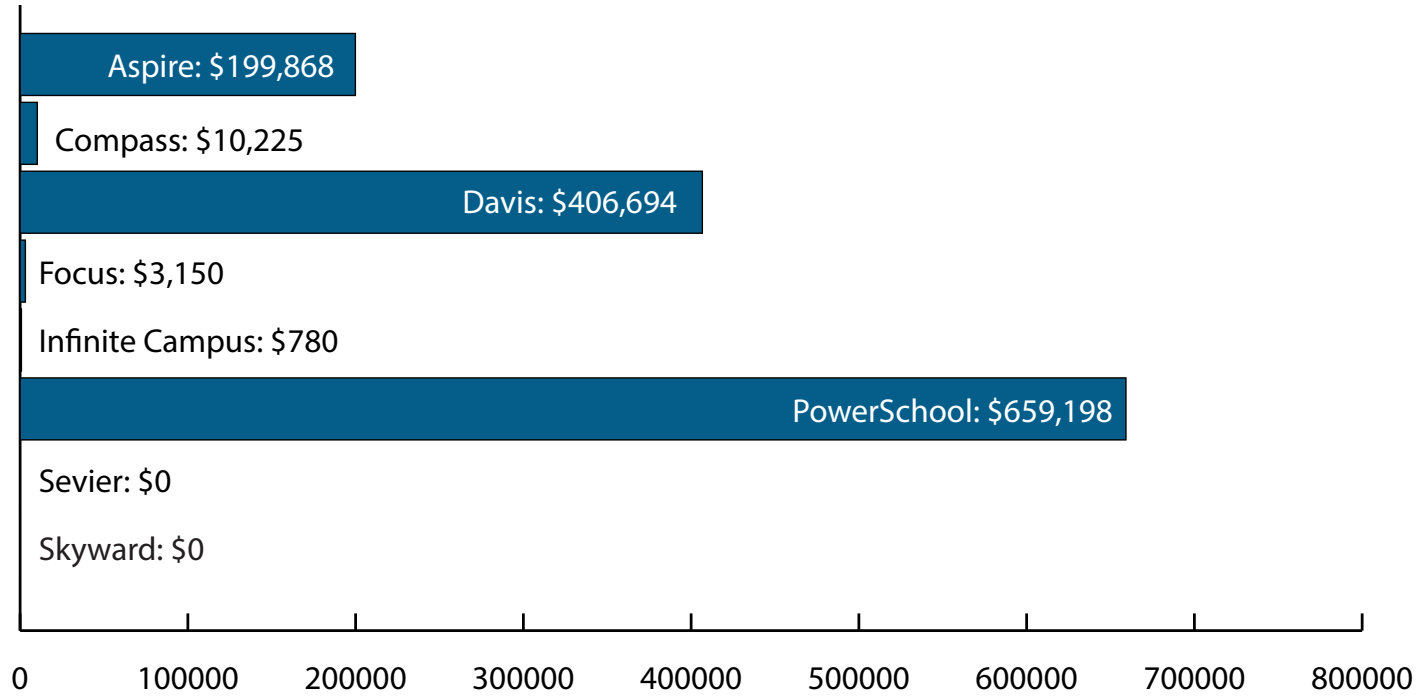


Figure 13. Estimated Annual Expenses for Custom Programming by SIS Vendor

Figure 13 shows the cost of custom programming per student by SIS vendor. Based on this information, Davis reported the highest cost per student at $5.74, which is expected as their system is entirely self-developed and the majority of their programming is custom. PowerSchool had the next highest cost per student at $3.56. LEAs using Infinite Campus and Sevier reported no costs for custom programming, and the single LEA using Focus reported a cost of only $3,150.

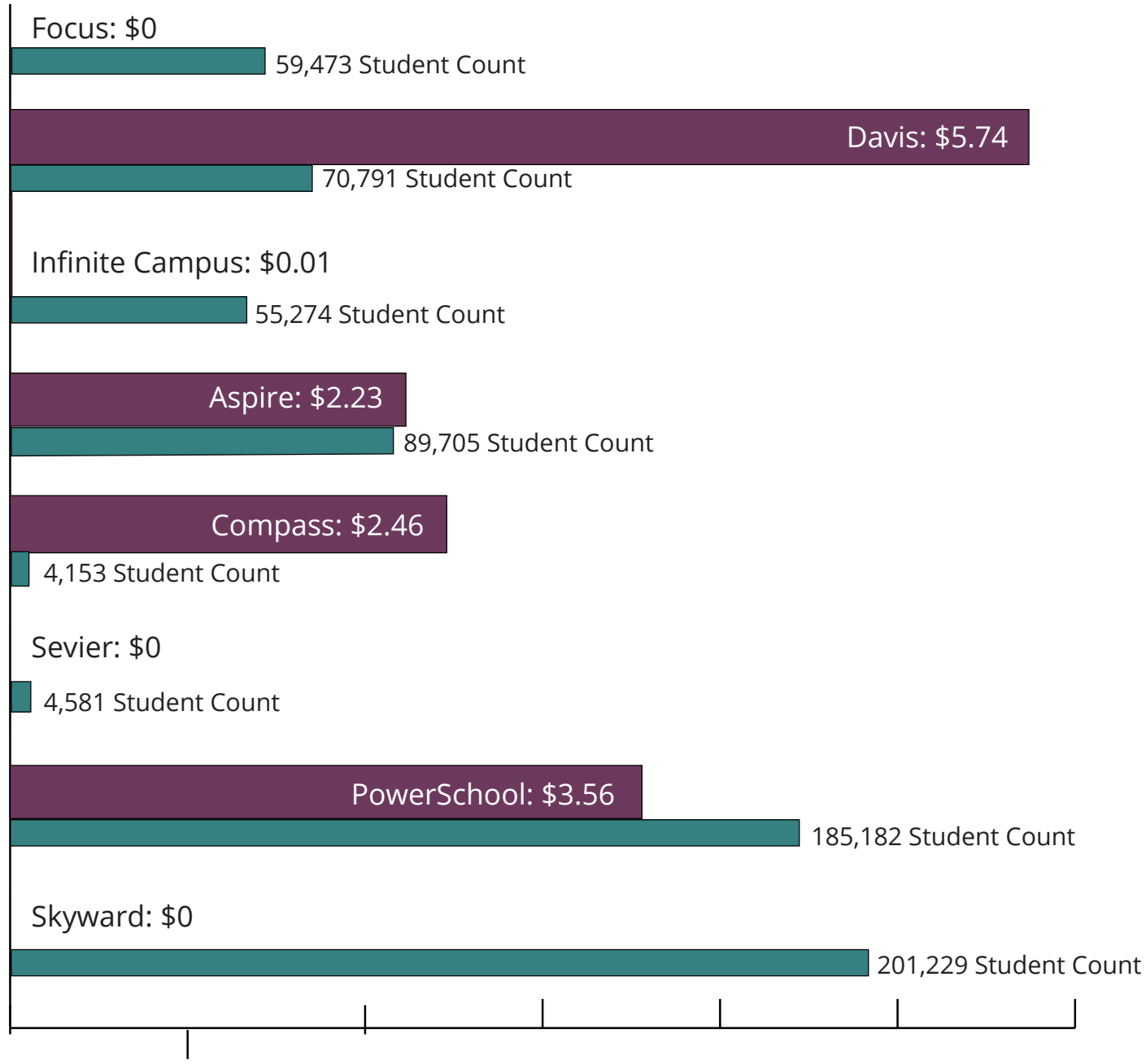
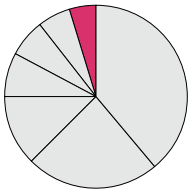


Figure 14.. Custom Programming Cost Per Student by SIS Vendor



System Modifications

LEAs reported an average annual expenditure of $488,181 for system modifications, which represents 4.7% of the total average annual expenses reported.

Based on the data validation interviews, 65% of LEAs included payments to their SIS vendor in their estimates for system modifications. There was a wide variation in how the rest of the respondents interpreted this term. For example, 3.4% of respondents included all schedule and registration changes, while 10.3% of others included managing system add-ons. Approximately 17.2% of LEAs considered system modifications to be included in their system licensing costs, and 6.9% considered this number to be the same as custom programming. Only 10.3% of LEAs estimated their in-house costs for system modifications.

Figure 15 shows the estimated dollars spent on system modifications that LEAs with different SIS vendors reported.

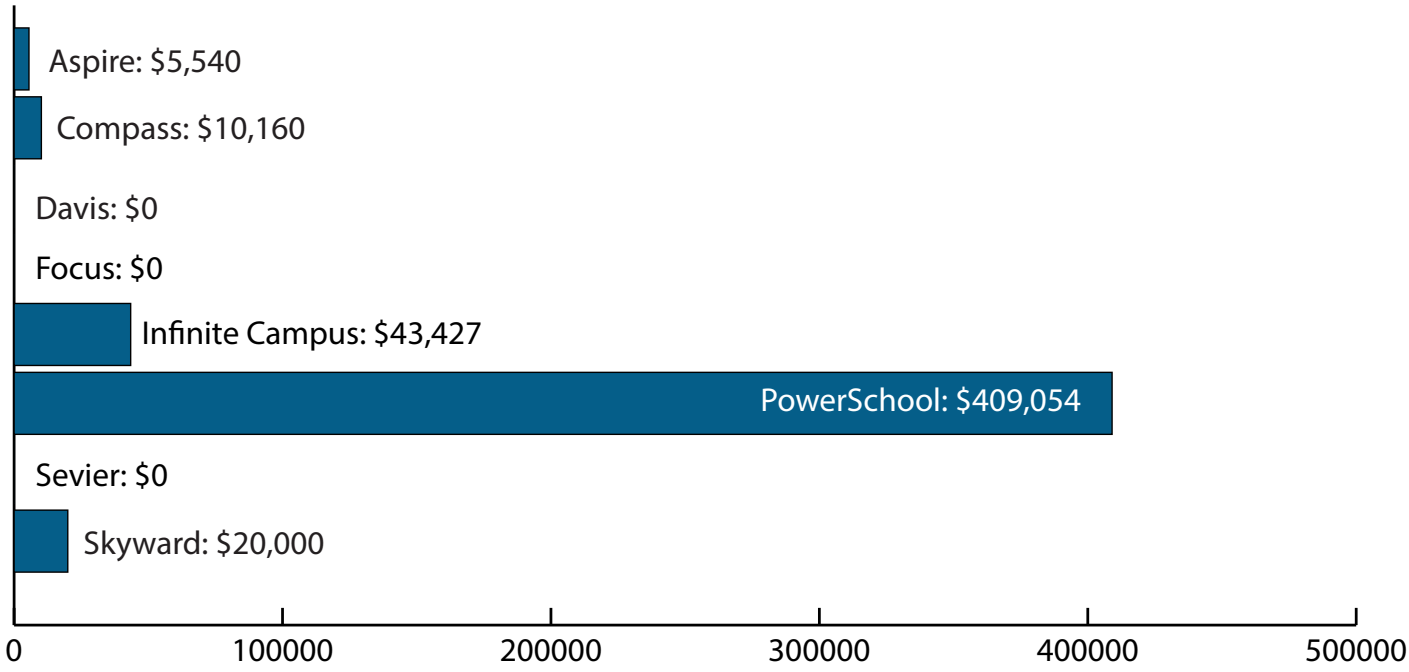


Figure 15. Estimated Annual Expenses for System Modifications by SIS Vendor

Figure 16 below illustrates the cost of system modifications per student by SIS vendor. Based on this information, Compass users reported the highest cost per student at $2.45, with PowerSchool users following at $2.21. The wide range of reported costs can be attributed to the varied interpretations of the term “system modifications.”

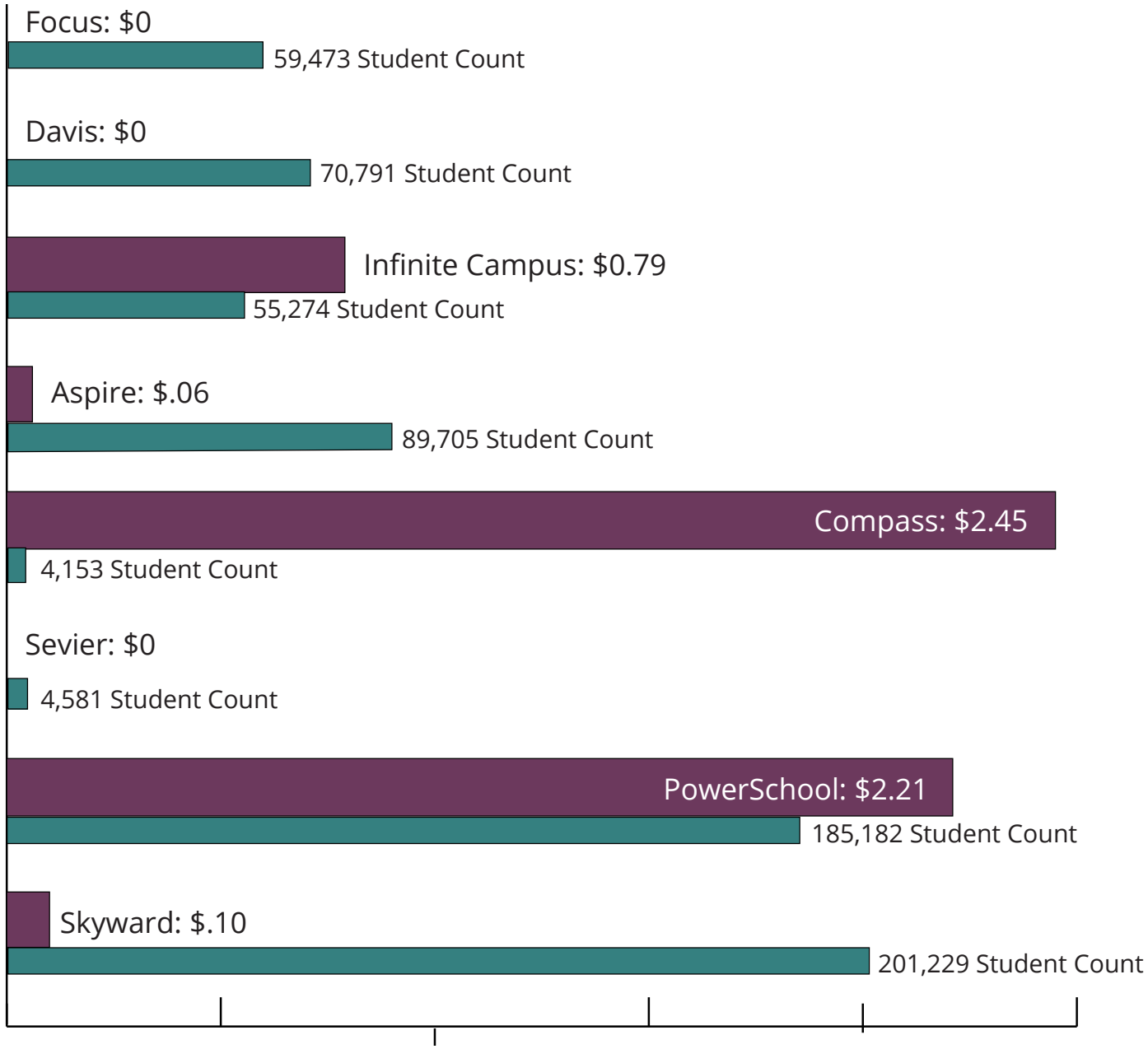


Figure 16. System Modifications Cost Per Student by SIS Vendor

Per Pupil Expenses for LEAs

Overall, PowerSchool users reported the highest average cost per pupil at $24.20. Sevier was next at $20.52, followed by Compass at $16.71. The lowest cost per pupil was reported by the Focus user at $6.54.

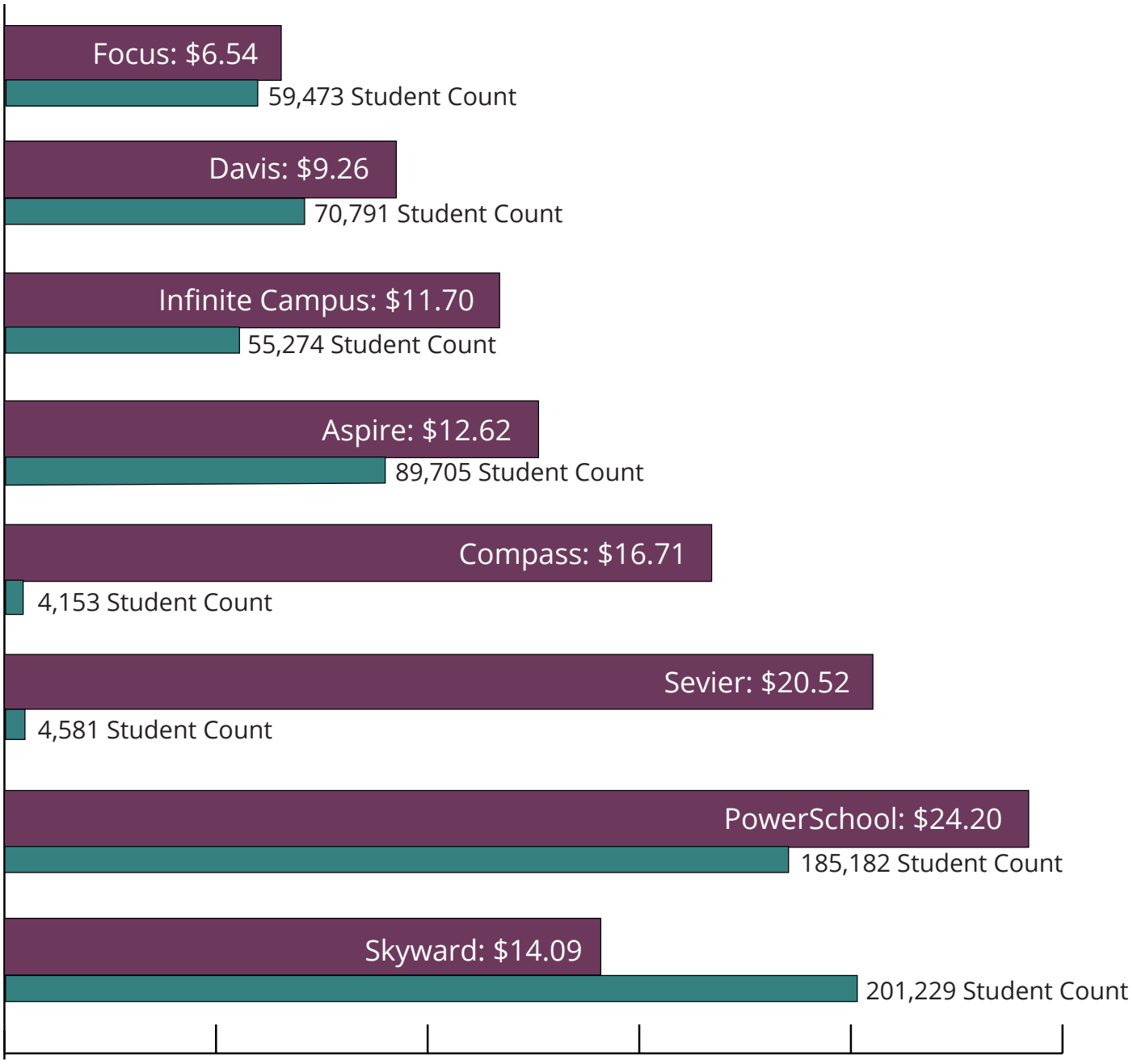


Figure 17. Annual Expenses Sum Per Student by SIS Vendor

A 2024 report created by USBE staff estimated that SIS costs ranged from $3.35 to $11.46 per pupil per year. The current survey, however, found a higher average cost of $15.37 per pupil, with a range from $0 to $426.51. This notable difference is likely due to the inclusion of estimated in-house costs for hosting, hardware, training, and staff salaries, as well as third-party costs, which were not estimated in the previous report.

Limitations for Estimated Annual Expenses

One limitation in the estimated annual expenses is the varied reporting methods of LEAs. Based on write-in comments from the Qualtrics survey, some vendors like PowerSchool and Infinite Campus do not provide a detailed cost breakdown for every expense category. For example, PowerSchool users reported that they could see separate costs for system licensing and hosting services, but other expense categories were not directly listed. Similarly, Infinite Campus users reported that they were provided a breakdown for system licensing, hosting services, and technical support, but no additional costs for other expense categories. This often led LEAs to either report a cost of zero for these categories or to estimate in-house or third-party expenses. This variation in SIS cost breakdown, combined with differences in how LEA SIS managers interpreted the expense categories, led to some variety in responses. Despite these variations, respondents expressed a high degree of confidence in their responses; when asked in the data validation interviews to rate their confidence on a scale of 1 (not confident at all) to 5 (very confident) regarding their estimated annual expenses, respondents provided an average score of 4.45 out of 5.

Estimated Annual Staff Time Spent

The survey sent to LEA SIS managers asked them to estimate their LEA's average annual staff time spent rounded to the nearest hour for a number of tasks related to their SIS. The estimated annual hours are calculated by totalling the following categories: Manually Transmitting Data, Validating Data, Correcting Errors, Generating Reports and Maintaining the SIS.

It is important to note that LEAs SIS Managers were asked to estimate a number of hours that they do not record or track. The breadth of this task caused some to provide false zeros. One LEA responded to an open text question on the Qualtrics survey stating that they do not track these data and thus put 0s for all the task categories. Another large district's SIS manager responded to an open text question on the Qualtrics survey stating, "Any attempt to quantify this would be a guess at best. There is no meaningful or accurate way to know how much time is spent on any one of these activities. There is too much variability in when any one of these types of tasks are required for an answer we give today to still be accurate in a month or a year. Additionally some of these are done to one extent or another by every single user of the SIS, which number [is] in the thousands. It's just not trackable."

This comment highlights another theme of this portion of the survey. SISs are used by almost everyone in an LEA, including support staff, teachers, students and parents. Some LEA SIS managers only included staff time spent by those manipulating the backend of the SIS, while others attempted to estimate efforts done by support staff, administrators, and teachers, which exponentially increased the staff time estimates.

These complexities highlight the interconnected and complicated nature of SISs and any data attempting to quantify their impact. While this complexity is a significant limitation in assessing staff time spent, most LEA SIS managers attempted their best to estimate staff time and their responses provide a unique glimpse into the time staff spend on SIS.

During the data validation interviews, respondents were asked to identify the staff and tasks they included in their estimations for staff time. This information is valuable for understanding

what respondents may have considered when providing their numbers, and it highlights the different ways LEAs manage SIS tasks. Some LEAs reported having large technology teams with eight or more people and dedicated help desks, while others noted that a single person, often with other responsibilities, handled all SIS tasks.

Estimated Summed Annual Staff Time Spent

In total, the estimated summed annual hours for all tasks combined was 773,047 hours. In the table below, the estimated summed annual hours are presented by SIS vendor and task category. It should be noted that these are not the total time associated with the use and maintenance of an SIS, but rather the added costs of each of the listed categories: Manually Transmitting Data, Validating Data, Correcting Errors, Generating Reports, and Maintaining the SIS. As was stated above there was one LEA, Sevier, which responded with no estimated annual hours because they do not track these data.

Estimated Annual Hours by SIS Vendor and Task Category:

SIS Vendor	Correcting Errors	Generating Reports	Maintaining the SIS	Manually Transmitting Data	Validating Data	Total Hours
Compass	180	65	1,450	80	286	2,061
Sevier	0	0	0	0	0	0
Focus	450	2,000	300	300	800	3,850
Infinite Campus	7,183	1,765	6,300	2,608	6,234	24,090
Davis	464	1,349	1,511	660	757	4,741
Aspire	46,318	13,507	27,311	7,648	43,962	138,746
PowerSchool	223,159	80,493	142,435	33,099	78,619	557,805
Skyward	4,472	5,310	13,740	5,180	13,052	41,754
Grand Total	**282,226**	**104,489**	**193,047**	**49,575**	**143,710**	**773,047**

Figure 18 shows estimated annual staff time by vendor. PowerSchool users reported the most staff time spent at 557,805 hours, which is more than four times the next closest vendor, Aspire, at 138,746 hours. It is important to note that Sevier chose not to estimate staff time spent and does not constitute a true zero for staff time spent.

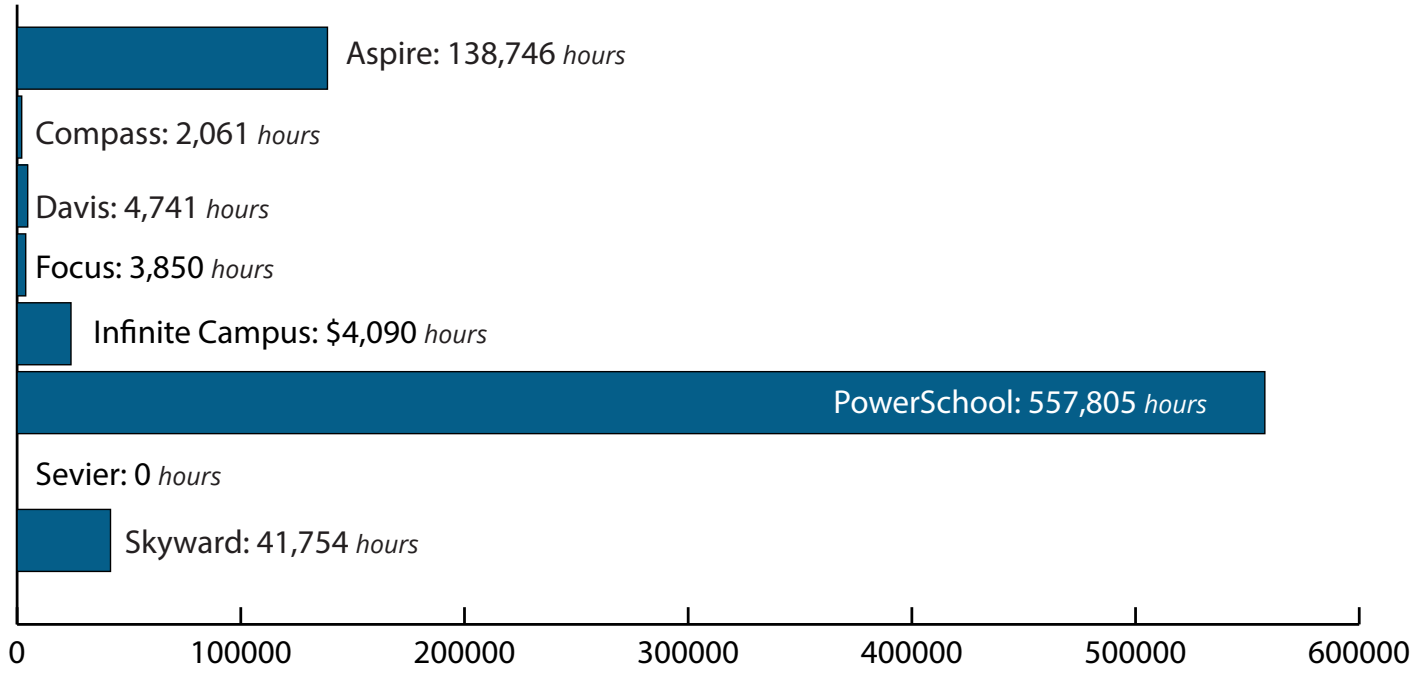


Figure 18. Estimated Annual Staff Time by SIS Vendor

The LEA SIS managers that reported the three highest estimated annual staff time were all PowerSchool users. Those three LEAs represent 61% of all estimated annual staff time. These PowerSchool users consist of a small charter school, a large district and a medium size district. A write-in response from the PowerSchool user that reported the highest number of hours of any LEA, accounting for 27.4% of total staff time reported, may provide some insight into these high estimates. This LEA stated, "These numbers were estimated based on 250-day[s]... worked annually by each employee. The percentage of each employee's work in each category was then estimated." Based on this response, it seems that this LEA estimated the work time of at least 21 employees full time, if not more employees part-time in the SIS.

These three extreme PowerSchool outliers present even greater difficulty for accurately comparing estimated staff time of their users per SIS.

Staff Time Required for Manual Data Transmission

Manual data transmission can refer to the process of manually formatting or entering data into one system from another source. LEA SIS managers who responded to the survey had various interpretations of this process within their LEAs.

LEAs reported an estimated annual staff time of 49,575 hours for this task, which accounts for 6% of the total estimated annual staff time. This is equivalent to 6,197 eight-hour workdays.

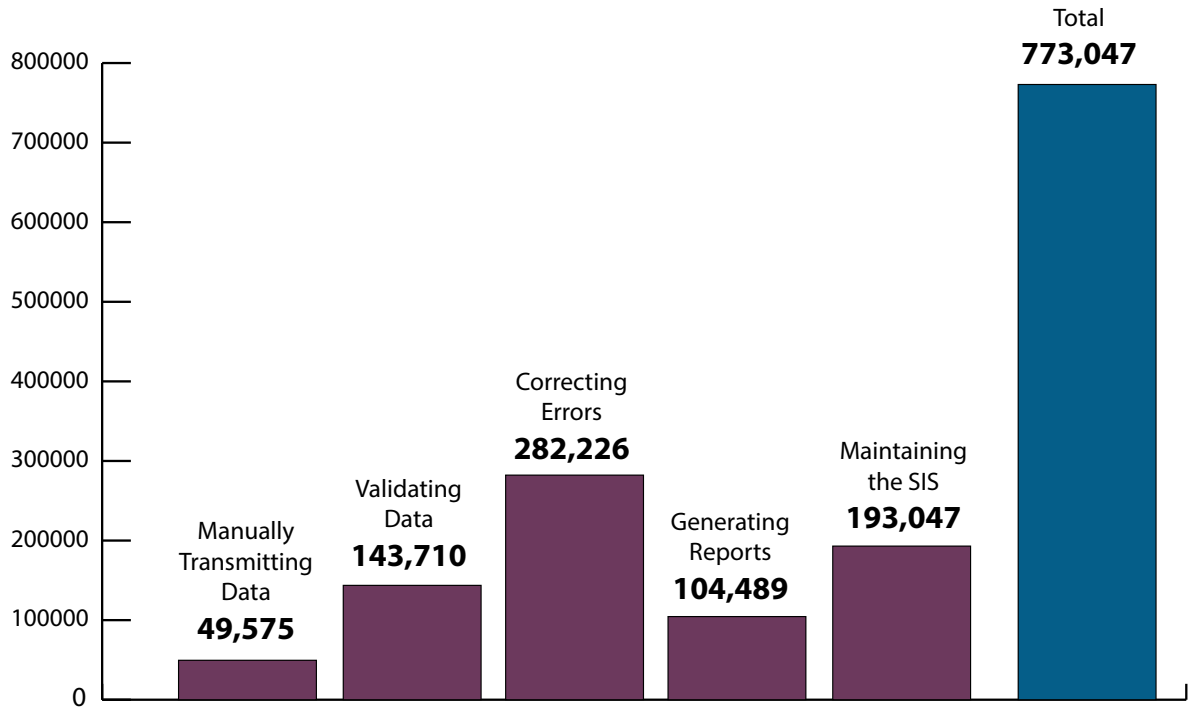


Figure 19. Estimated Annual Hours by Task Category

In the data validation interviews, 62% of respondents said that the manual data transmissions were handled by the LEA SIS manager or other technology team staff. 16.6% of respondents to the data validation interviews accounted for staff time of registrars, counselors, secretaries, teachers, or principals for this category.

Of the data validation interview respondents, 25% stated they do not perform any manual data transmissions. One respondent noted that their SIS automatically handles these transmissions. 33% of respondents indicated their estimate included time spent on creating custom reports, and another 33% reported that their response included time spent writing Structured Query Language (SQL) scripts. SQL scripts are text files containing commands used for data manipulation and database management. 12% of respondents indicated that they do not perform any SQL script-writing and two respondents explained that they paid for outsourcing of SQL script-writing when needed due to a lack of internal expertise. Three data validation interview respondents noted that switching their SIS led to a significant increase in manual data transmissions as data needed to be moved between systems.

Ultimately, it was clear from the variations in responses that there was not a uniform understanding of what “manual data transmission” means in a SIS.

Staff Time Required for Data Validation

Data validation is the process of ensuring that data are accurate and align with the standards required for their intended use. In the context of an SIS, this typically involves confirming that data are error-free before being submitted through UTREx to the USBE, but it also applies to maintaining correct data at the school or LEA level.

LEAs reported an estimated annual staff time of 143,710 hours for data validation, which represents 18% of the total estimated annual staff time. This is equivalent to 17,964 eight-hour workdays.

According to the data validation interviews, the most frequently reported staff members accounting for this time were LEA SIS managers, representing 57.7% of respondents, and other technology staff, representing 30% of respondents. This could suggest that some respondents focused their estimates on the time required to ensure error-free submissions to the USBE through UTREx.

However, data submissions to the USBE require information collected from various staff members in an LEA. Some respondents' estimates for data validation accounted for the work of these other staff members. One third of data validation respondents reported including additional staff such as school administrators, district administrators, registrars, teachers, principals, counselors, and secretaries.

Staff Time Required for Error Correction

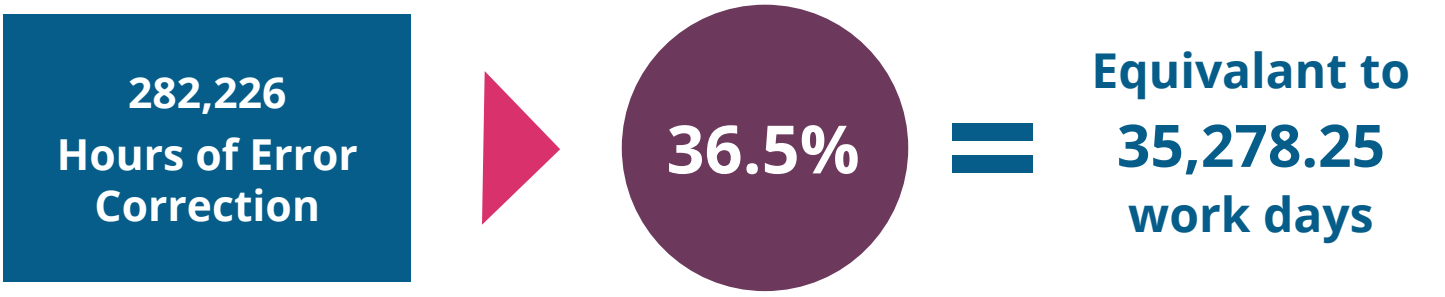
Correcting errors means fixing any inaccurate data, inconsistent data or data that do not adhere to the standards with which they are being processed. In Utah, LEAs are required to submit nightly data uploads through UTREx. When data do not align with UTREx standards, these submissions return with errors and warnings from the USBE.

LEAs reported an estimated annual staff time of 282,226 hours for correcting errors. This represents 36.5% of the total estimated annual staff time reported and is equivalent to 35,278.25 eight-hour workday.

According to the data validation interviews, LEA SIS manager time was the most commonly accounted for, with 64% of respondents mentioning them, followed by other technology staff, with 48% of respondents mentioning them. This may be partly because some respondents focused their time estimates on correcting errors after submissions to the USBE through UTREx.

However, similar to data validation, those state data submissions involve information collected from a variety of staff members within an LEA. Some respondents' estimates for correcting errors included the time of these other staff members who are sometimes part of the error correction process. Over half of the data validation respondents reported accounting for additional staff, including: school administrators, district administrators, registrars, teachers, principals, counselors, and secretaries.

When asked what activities were accounted for under this category, all respondents of the data validation interviews mentioned fixing UTREx submission errors. Additionally, 31.6% mentioned fixing other errors on internal LEA reports for schools or superintendents. These results indicate that most LEAs likely interpreted this question similarly and are accounting for these specific UTREx errors.



Staff Time Required for Report Generation

LEAs are required to create various documents with specific data throughout the school year. Some of these reports are mandated by state or federal law, while others are internal requests to attempt to answer specific questions. SIS can automatically generate some of these reports, but the ability to customize them can be complicated, depending on the vendor and complexity of the report.

LEAs reported an estimated annual staff time of 104,489 hours for generating reports. This represents 13.5% of the total estimated annual staff time reported and is equivalent to 13,061.12 eight-hour workdays.

According to the data validation interviews, LEA SIS managers and/or a technology staff member were mentioned by 86.9% of respondents. Additionally, 8.7% of respondents mentioned a registrar. One respondent noted that no LEA staff members generate reports that are not already produced by their SIS.

When asked what activities were considered in this category, 76% of data validation interview respondents mentioned accounting for reports that were not automatically generated in their SIS. Some respondents specifically mentioned Government Records Access Management Act (GRAMA) requests, custom reporting, and state and federal reports. Two respondents named the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) and Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (SEBT) programs as reports that require a significant amount of time to generate. The CRDC report requires several data categories that are not typically used in other reports, necessitating a substantial amount of time for custom creation. The SEBT report, which is part of a recently-implemented federal program, was rolled out quickly requiring data not previously submitted to the USBE.

Staff Time Required for System Maintenance

System maintenance encompasses a broad category of tasks that are performed for the operation of an SIS.

LEAs reported an estimated annual staff time of 193,047 hours spent on system maintenance. This figure, which accounts for 24% of the total estimated annual staff time reported, is equivalent to 24,130.87 eight-hour workdays.

According to the data validation interviews, LEA SIS managers and/or a technology staff member were mentioned by 74% of respondents as the primary performer of these tasks. Additionally, 22% of respondents reported that their SIS vendor handles system maintenance. Only 14% of respondents reported accounting for an additional staff member, such as a registrar, school administrator, principal, or secretary.

Respondents appear to have found it difficult to determine what to include in this category, as shown by the variety of activities they mentioned in their estimates. The most frequent response, from 38% of data validation interview respondents, was that their estimate included annual end of year “turnover” activities, including report card generation, correcting data errors, learning new SIS features, updating course codes, and scheduling. Some also mentioned time working on staff permissions. This refers to managing access to various student data. Furthermore, 33% specifically mentioned enrollment and registration as part of their SIS maintenance.

Limitations of Staff Time Required

Staff time is a critical cost in the operation of a SIS, but accurately estimating the time spent on various tasks presents a challenge. In data validation interviews, respondents rated their confidence in their estimates of annual staff time at 3.6 out of 5, with 23% admitting that their responses involved an element of guessing.

One of the main difficulties is distinguishing between time spent on data validation and correcting errors. Several LEA SIS managers found it challenging to separate these two activities, with some describing the distinction as arbitrary. One interviewee indicated that it was so difficult to determine specific numbers for each category that they evenly divided their LEA SIS manager's yearly hours across all categories.

Despite these challenges, many LEAs provided thoughtful and educated estimates. They often consulted with various staff members and created formulas to determine the time spent on different tasks. While many respondents were unsure if other LEAs interpreted the questions in the same way, they felt confident that their own responses were appropriate based on their interpretations. Ultimately, a perfectly accurate response to these questions would require hours of record-keeping and data collection over several years to determine an average.

The complexity of tracking and estimating staff time further emphasizes the integrated nature of the SIS in an LEA's daily operations and also highlights the reality of LEA priorities for data collection.

Cost of System Modifications Required

This section of the survey asked LEAs to estimate the frequency with which they had to make changes to their SISs based on legislative changes, rule updates, or new data requests.

Legislative Changes

First, LEAs were asked how often they had to make modifications to their SIS required by legislative changes and then to estimate the cost of these modifications.

Based on survey responses, LEAs reported a variety of frequencies for legislative changes requiring system modifications. "Our LEA Does Not Know" was the most common response with 31.2%, followed by "Never" with 23.2% of respondents.

Those who reported that they did not know were invited to write in more

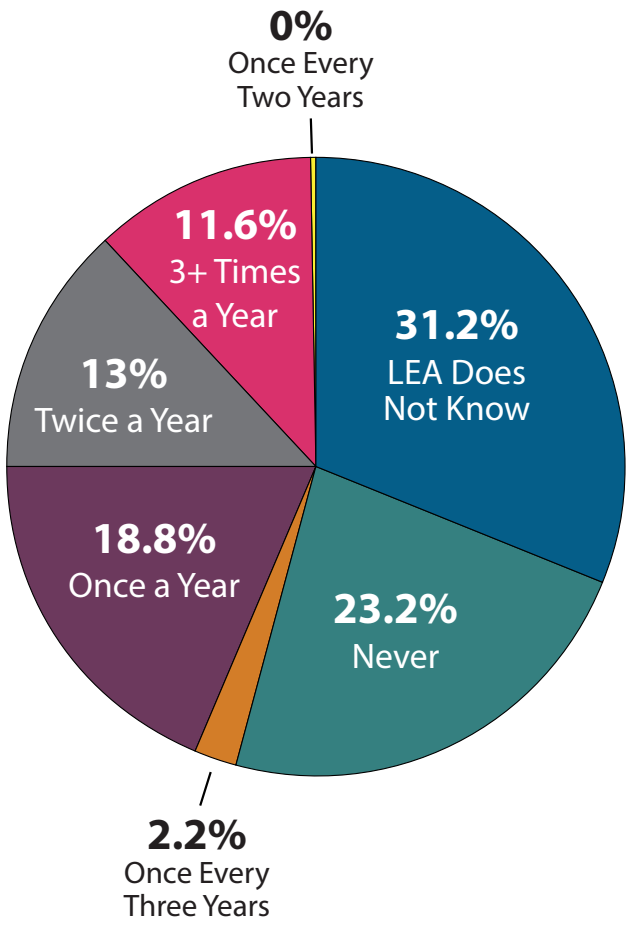


Figure 20. Frequency of Changes Required by Legislation

information about why they did not know. In these write-in comments, 25 LEAs explicitly mentioned that the USBE or the Aspire team is responsible for those modifications, not the LEA. Nine LEAs stated that their non-Aspire SIS vendor handles the updates. Six LEAs indicated they either did not get a response from their vendor or did not know who was responsible. In the survey, they were asked to contact their SIS vendor for the answer if their vendor takes care of modifications, which some apparently did not hear back from.

The total self-reported cost for system modifications related to legislative changes was $268,463.

Rule Updates

Next, respondents were asked how often they make modifications to their SIS required by rule updates and then were asked to estimate the cost of these modifications.

The survey results for rule updates showed a similar trend to legislative updates. The most frequent response was "Our LEA Does Not Know," with 31.2% and "Never" with 27.5% of respondents.

Figure 21 illustrates the frequency of changes required by rule updates and the percentage of respondents who selected each option.

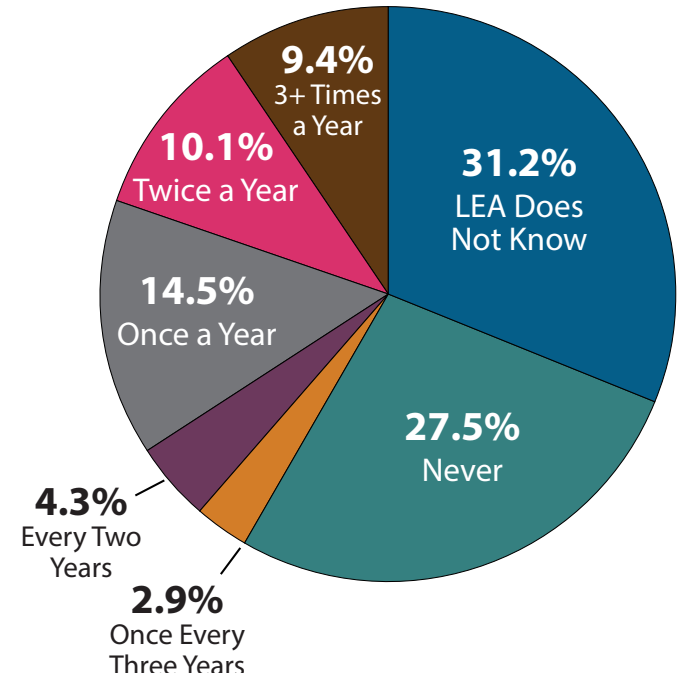


Figure 21. Frequency of Changes Required by Rule

When asked to provide additional information if their LEA did not know the frequency of rule updates, 27 LEAs mentioned that USBE staff or the Aspire team is responsible. Eight LEAs stated their non-Aspire SIS vendor is responsible. Seven LEAs provided responses indicating a lack of knowledge or distinction between types of changes.

The total self-reported cost for modifications due to rule updates was $165,213.

New Data Requests

Finally, respondents were asked how often they have to make modifications required by new data requests and estimate an associated cost.

For new data requests, there was a tie for the most common responses, with "Never" and "Our LEA does not know" each with 28.3% of respondents.

Figure 22 below shows the frequency of changes required by new data requests and the percentage of respondents who selected each option.

When asked why LEAs do not know, 25 LEAs stated that USBE staff or the Aspire team handles these changes. Six LEAs noted that their SIS vendors were responsible for implementing necessary modifications. Four LEAs explicitly stated their role did not necessitate tracking or that they did not have capacity to track these changes.

The total self-reported cost for system modifications due to new data requests was $287,174.

Limitations of System Modification Costs

The data validation interviews revealed a widespread challenge among LEA SIS managers in distinguishing between system modifications required by legislative changes versus those required by rule. When asked to estimate their confidence in making this distinction, the average response was 2.4 out of 5, with 43% of respondents giving a score of one.

A common sentiment expressed by respondents was that this distinction is not relevant to their work. One charter school LEA SIS manager stated that it is "just irrelevant to us" and that they "don't have time to even be asking that question." Similarly, a district SIS manager said, "All I know is, I gotta make changes." Some explained that even when they learn the origin of a change during monthly meetings with USBE staff, it makes little difference to their daily responsibilities.

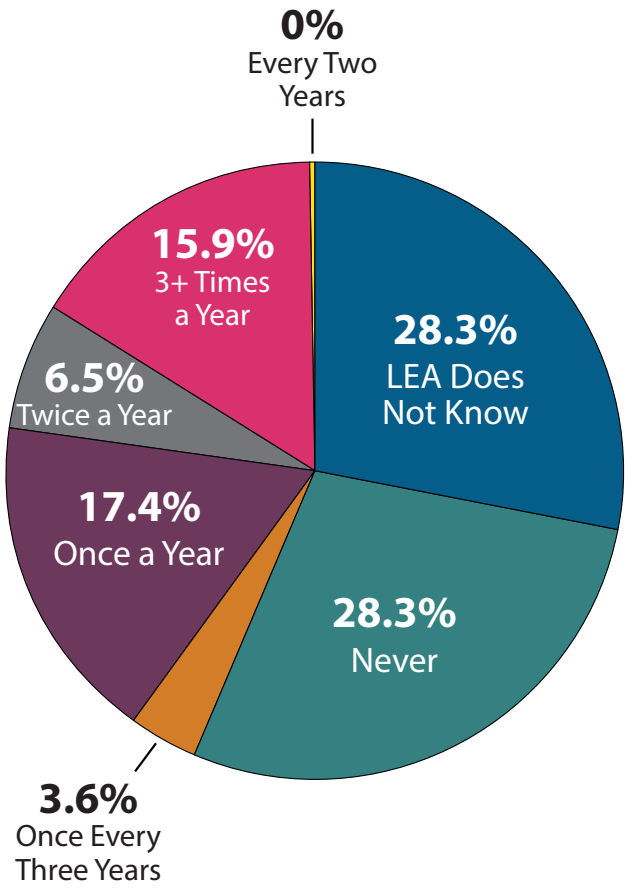


Figure 22. Frequency of Changes Required by New Data Requests

LEA Vendor Satisfactions

As a part of the Qualtrics survey, LEAs were asked about their satisfaction with their SIS vendor.

Overall Satisfaction

The vast majority of LEAs responded that overall they were satisfied with the capabilities of their SIS. Only 13 LEAs responded that they were "very dissatisfied" or "dissatisfied". This represents just 9% of LEAs that responded to the survey. In Figure 35 you can see the overall satisfaction.

Overall satisfaction of LEAs with their SIS is broken down by vendor in the following charts. Vendors that service only one LEA were not included in these graphs. The homegrown

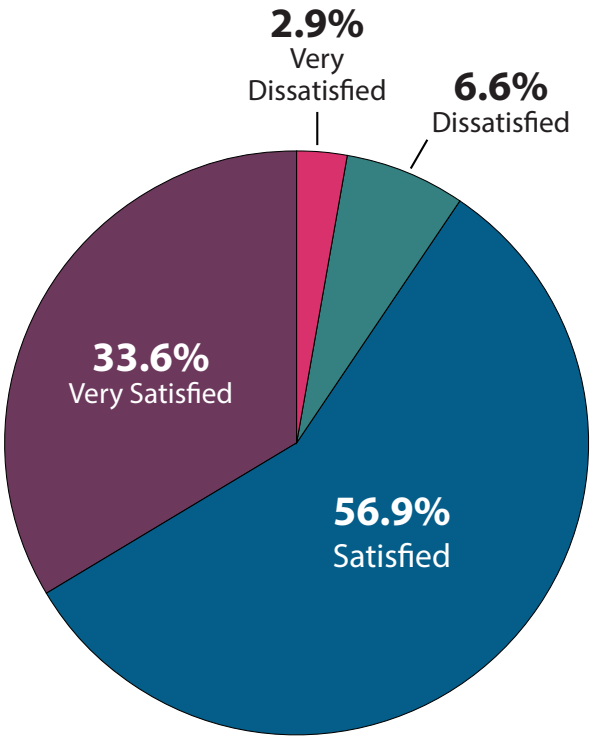


Figure 23. Overall Satisfaction with SIS Capabilities

systems used by Sevier and Davis LEAs both reported they were “very satisfied” with their system. The Focus SIS, which represented one district, reported being “satisfied.”

Infinite Campus and Skyward had the highest levels of overall satisfaction. In contrast, PowerSchool and Compass had the highest levels of overall dissatisfaction among the LEAs surveyed; however, all SIS vendors had more satisfaction than dissatisfaction in their responses. The overall satisfaction levels of each vendor are included in Appendix D.

Satisfaction by Capability

LEAs were asked about their satisfaction with their SIS based on several capabilities. These included reporting, tracking Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), grade management, data analytics, attendance tracking, and data management.

The highest levels of reported satisfaction were with the SISs’ capabilities for the USBE reporting at 94.2%, attendance tracking at 86.1%, and student data management at 93.4%. The highest levels of reported SISs’ capability dissatisfaction were with IEP tracking at 25.6%, reporting at 20.4%, and grade management at 21.1%.

Charts detailing overall satisfaction levels and satisfaction levels by each SIS vendor can be found in Appendix D.

Capabilities of the Current SIS Landscape

This section outlines the current capabilities and limitations of the various SIS adopted in Utah based on information from the USBE Internal Audit reports (Educational Service provider Audit Report 21-02), surveys, interviews with LEA SIS managers and USBE staff.

USIMS System Capabilities

USIMS is the initiative designed to re-engineer the USBE’s core data collections and reporting capabilities in accordance with Utah Code § 53E-3-518. When fully implemented, this system will become a central component of the USBE’s data reporting framework.

As demonstrated in Figure 36 below, USIMS is designed to improve data quality and system efficiency, reduce redundancy, increase automation and reduce manual interventions, and support fluid solutions for immediate responses.

USIMS technology is consistent with current private sector best practices with the addition of public sector privacy and security best practices. USIMS is working to provide real time data integration and visualizations that can be easily customized.

Features are being implemented from USIMS on a rolling basis. Work is currently underway to implement the Student Data Backpack, which is a legislatively mandated program requiring each student to have an electronic learner profile, managed by the USBE, accessible to parents and easily transferable between LEAs (Utah Code § 53E-3-511). USIMS is making this possible by using a national data standard for quick data exchange called the Ed-FI Application Programming Interface (API). API is a standard software practice that allows for the quick configuration and integration of systems and their data.

To accomplish USIMS' various functionalities, staff works closely with each SIS vendor.

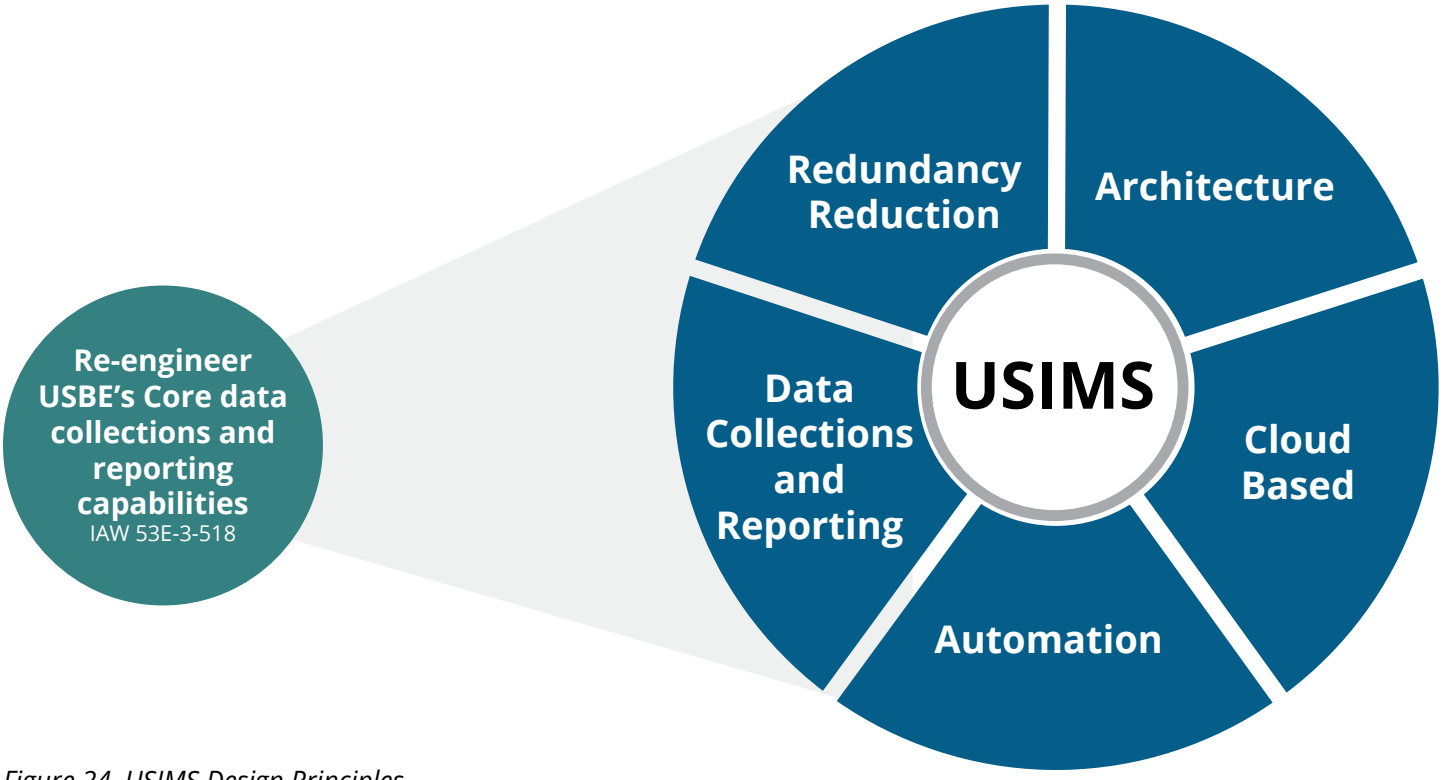


Figure 24. USIMS Design Principles

USIMS and Data Quality:

One of the primary benefits of USIMS will be improved data quality. USIMS will improve data quality by:

1. Providing real-time feedback to end users (teachers, staff and parents) eliminating delays in notifications on errors and providing immediate information for student enrollment.
2. Aligning to a national data standard, allowing any vendors to quickly adopt interoperational capabilities.
3. Incorporating data into one place, reducing the duplication and replication necessary to support the current education data landscape.
4. Providing a simplified data model and infrastructure capable of adding and removing necessary data points more quickly.
5. Providing an infrastructure that can easily integrate with other state systems and improve data sharing among required agencies (for things such as birth certificates or vaccination records).

USIMS as a Pioneer in Modernization

In a recent cohort conversation, compared to other states USIMS's approach to data and infrastructure is more than five years ahead of other state modernization projects. Multiple states have requested a 5-year roadmap for capabilities USIMS is implementing right now, including real time data support. While several states are pursuing modernization in one or more areas, none appear to be simultaneously integrating educator licensing, student

information, and financial systems into a single solution.

Even among states who have or are moving to one SIS, infrastructure must be modernized to support data driven decisions and state-level reporting.

Utah is also among the first states to request that SIS vendors be capable of receiving data from the USBE. Currently, most—if not all—state systems are set to retrieve data from SIS vendors, but cannot send data back. Utah's Student Data Backpack requires that information be sent from one SIS to another in the event a student's information is requested and therefore must be able to receive this backpack from USIMS (Utah Code § 53E-3-511).

Aspire Capabilities and Limitations

Background on the Current State of Aspire

Aspire is the USBE-created SIS, available to all LEAs at no cost. The USBE staff maintain the system, but it has not received major updates since a rule was enacted by USBE to halt major upgrading.

As of 2024, Aspire was being used by 101 LEAs, which is 64.5% of all LEAs. However, since the system is primarily used by charter schools and smaller districts, it represents only 16% of Utah's total student population.

To update Aspire, USBE staff have estimated a one-time cost of $1,077,800 and ongoing costs of $491,815. It is important to note that even after this investment, the system would still lack some of the advanced features and customization capabilities offered by other commercially available systems.

It is also a consideration that if the USBE were to stop supporting Aspire, the LEAs currently using it would be required to pay for a commercial SIS.

LEA SIS Manager Aspire Feedback

Aspire Users Interview Responses

In the data validation interviews, those that were in Aspire were asked why they continued to use Aspire. Most commonly, Aspire users mentioned staying due to the cost, its simple design, responsive help desk and automatic state reporting updates.

A member of the Aspire users group mentioned that there is a list of Aspire fixes and feedback several years long, which are slowly getting fixed. Several mentioned witnessing the incredible progress Aspire has made over the past few years and their gratitude for the USBE's free running of Aspire.

> *"Free is a great number and honestly, that's why we're staying with it. The other thing is because it does connect to UTREx and to Data Gateway and to all of those other reporting agencies that we're required to do. Because I would hate to have to go from our SIS system and manually upload it to the state system. That just would be a nightmare. And so it's the most convenient as far as the State system uploads." - Charter SIS manager*

> *"Why would we buy something when we have something free that works really well?... This one place [where] we can save money that then can go into giving more to the kids. So we like it and we hope it doesn't go away... We really appreciate it." - LEA SIS manager*

Non Aspire Users Interview Responses

In the data validation interviews, those that were not using Aspire were asked why they had moved away or not chosen Aspire. The most common response for those that were not in Aspire, was that they lacked experience in Aspire because their LEAs had switched many years ago. Many LEAs switched from Aspire to SIS vendors they felt would be more reliable for longer when it was announced that Aspire would no longer be updated. LEA SIS managers also mentioned the lack of customization options, cost of switching from their current system, and long-term investment in their current system as incentives not to switch to Aspire.

Two respondents of the LEA SIS managers survey mentioned similar sentiment that their switch off of Aspire actually saved their LEA money. One mentioned that the switch "has saved a number of hours in other places, so that it's been worth it…" The other said they saved a full time employee when they moved from Aspire to another system due to all the capabilities of their new system.

> *"It would scare me to death to go to Aspire to be honest with you." - LEA SIS manager*

> *"I'm vaguely familiar with [Aspire], just because I have colleagues at other districts who I know. But I don't know anything about how it works, or how quality of a product it is." - LEA SIS manager*

Common Interview Response Themes

Aspire Permissions

One of the most common frustrations with Aspire mentioned by LEA SIS manager was confusion around the systems setting for staff permissions, which dictate who can have access to, or controls over which data.

> *"In Aspire it seemed like…everybody had permissions to everything and every student at every school." - LEA SIS manager no longer using Aspire*

> *"I feel like [permissions are] not clear at all. I'm always asking the Aspire help group…. I don't know what I'm clicking on to get what I want… I have no idea what I'm doing or what I'm giving access to, to who basically." - LEA SIS manager currently using Aspire*

Third party Integrations

One LEA SIS manager mentioned frustration that although a certain third party vendor, like Canva, may have state licensing, the connection between that vendor and Aspire does not always exist or run smoothly.

One charter SIS manager that recently left Aspire mentioned that data extraction on Aspire was difficult and this led to a duplication of efforts when attempting to integrate with third party applications.

> *"It was [a] management nightmare to try and keep data in sync whether that's student enrollment or grades never sync[ing], so we had to manually move grades over from LMS into the SIS to send to the state." - Charter SIS manager*

Lack of Customization

One LEA SIS manager mentioned that once their charter school moved to a complex schedule

and grading system they could no longer use Aspire. Another mentioned that the customization abilities were worth the cost of a different SIS.

> *"There's a reason why we're spending a hundred thousand dollars a year versus no dollars on Aspire… It [has] a lot to do with, like, the way that you can customize screens… create custom reports, create custom tables… Not long ago we decided we needed to know in our SIS which students had paid for insurance on their chromebooks and so we put a checkbox in [our SIS] that says whether they've paid for insurance or not. And then it's a searchable field… Stuff like that is just critical… You can't go through one student at a time and find out that information." - LEA SIS manager*

Messaging System

One third of LEA Aspire managers interviewed mentioned issues with the messaging system. They reported needing to find alternative solutions because the system does not support images or links and makes it difficult to write coherent messages due to text spacing issues.

Current LEA Data Support

The USBE Data Quality Process

Accurate data are essential for making informed decisions about Utah's public education system. From classrooms to the legislature, data are used to evaluate programs, shape policy, and determine funding. To ensure that information provided by LEAs is accurate and reliable, the USBE has several safeguard processes in place throughout the submission cycle.

Automated Error and Warning Checks

Automated checks review nightly submissions and immediately flag issues through errors and warnings. Errors must be corrected before data can be submitted; warnings highlight potential concerns but allow data to be uploaded.

This process ensures that invalid, inaccurate, or incomplete data do not enter the USBE system.

Courtesy Reviews

Before official deadlines, the USBE's Data and Statistics team offers "courtesy reviews" of each LEA's data. These early reviews highlight areas to be checked and give LEA staff the opportunity to correct issues before final reporting dates on October 1, December 1, and Year-End. Courtesy reviews provide LEAs with clear feedback on areas needing attention, reduce last-minute corrections, and increase confidence in final data.

Graduation Data Reviews and Training

Each year, the USBE selects several LEAs for an in-depth review of graduation reporting practices. During these visits, the USBE team:

1. Verifies that local records match what is reported to the USBE;
2. Provides training for registrars, special education staff, administrators, and data submitters;
3. Reviews how data are collected and submitted;

4. Conducts random sampling to check compliance with regulations and processes, and;
5. Recommends improvements to strengthen local data quality.

Monthly LEA Data Meetings

The USBE hosts monthly virtual meetings for LEA staff responsible for submitting data through UTREx. These sessions, typically lasting about two and a half hours, provide updates and training on UTREx specifications, guidance on recent or upcoming submissions, clarification on specific data fields, and opportunities for LEA staff to submit questions or request agenda items. After each session, meeting materials and recordings are made available to LEA SIS managers as well as staff follow up on any questions raised during the meeting. These meetings often support new users by repeating vital information around every major submission deadline.

Attendees from the Data Systems and Advisory Committee mentioned that these meetings provide critical information for their work and they make efforts to attend regularly.

The meetings are led by the USBE's Data and Statistics team in collaboration with the Information Technology (IT) and Student Data Privacy teams.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

While today's systems provide strong safeguards, this has not always been the case. Thirteen years ago, inconsistent processes led to inaccurate reporting and mistrust in the data. Since then, through a shared commitment to continuous improvement, the USBE and LEAs have made significant strides in strengthening data quality.

Error rates have decreased to the point that the former requirement for each LEA to hire an external auditor has been eliminated. This change reduced costs for districts and increased confidence in the accuracy of the data. Building on this progress, the USBE is now preparing for the next level of quality assurance by exploring the use of artificial intelligence and real-time feedback as part of its modernization and interoperability work.

Current UTREx-LEA Support

UTREx is the method through which LEAs submit student data to the USBE. Among other things, the data collected through UTREx are used in the funding formulas for the Minimum Schools Program (MSP), which is the primary source of funding for LEAs. A number of USBE staff are dedicated to supporting and communicating with LEAs regarding UTREx submissions. In addition to a variety of resources updated and available on the USBE website, staff support LEAs through the UTREx Data Clearinghouse File Specification document, the Help Desk and the LEA SIS

manager monthly meeting that was mentioned above.

UTREx Data Clearinghouse FIle Specification

When changes are made to data submission requirements, they are recorded in the UTREx Clearinghouse Specifications document. This 269 page document is uploaded and available on the USBE website for use by LEAs as well as SIS vendors. The document is officially updated twice a year and includes a revision history outlining changes, corrections, and additions. It contains detailed information about each data field, valid values and a short description that includes tips or notes. The document includes School Interoperability Framework (SIF) mapping which ensures that data can be translated between different systems.

The document also helps LEA SIS managers understand which errors are non-loading errors and which are warnings. Non-loading errors also known as fatal errors. Errors are classified as level 1 or 2 non-loading errors and level 1 or 2 warnings. Non-loading errors are when the data does not conform with the Data Clearinghouse Rules or the allowed values. When this happens the entire record is not allowed to load until LEAs decide their data is accurate and finalize. LEAs finalize their data submission 3 times a year at which point they must resolve or finalize their errors and warnings.

UTREx Help Desk

A help desk is available to assist LEAs with questions about their data submissions.

SIS Vendor User Groups

In data validation interviews, many LEA SIS managers reported that they rely on their SIS vendor user groups. Most commercially available SIS vendors, as well as Aspire, host a regular user group for LEA SIS managers. These groups allow various LEAs using one SIS vendor to meet together, often with a vendor representative. These groups collaborate to resolve any issues and plan for upcoming changes. When new legislative or rule changes impact data, LEAs must go to their SIS vendor to request the relevant modifications. In these groups, LEA SIS managers can often work together with other users to understand what configurations are working and to workshop common issues. One LEA SIS manager mentioned that their SIS vendor user group is “a tight knit group. We meet on a monthly basis to go over exactly what [our SIS vendor] needs from us and what we need from [our SIS vendor]. We train each other. They train us.” A significant portion of the interviewees mentioned their SIS vendor user group as a helpful source of information, describing the groups as highly collaborative and essential for training. PowerSchool, Infinite Campus, Skyward, and Aspire all host similar groups.

Limitations of the Current SIS Landscape

This section outlines the limitations of Utah’s current SIS landscape, based on information from the USBE Internal Audit reports, surveys, interviews with LEA SIS managers and USBE staff.

LEA Personnel Challenges

Data-related challenges at the LEA level are often connected to the qualifications, training, and motivation of LEA SIS managers and other LEA staff interacting with the SIS. LEA SIS managers are responsible for a variety of tasks, including understanding their SIS, managing

state reporting requirements, and adapting to system changes. In smaller districts and charter schools, LEA SIS managers may hold multiple roles, which can prevent them from becoming experts in their SIS.

The 2022 internal audit by the USBE (Data Reliability, Assessment Data (22-01-A)) found that one of the causes of data quality issues was a "Lack of recruitment and retention of competent individuals." The report also cited a "Lack of awareness or understanding of, an indifference to, or an intentional lack of adherence to, compliance objectives." For instance, some LEA personnel admitted to not knowing how to retrieve data from their SIS. The audit noted that some LEA staff are aware of data concerns and aware of resources like SIS user groups but do not participate and do not reach out to USBE staff for support.

Additionally, the audit found that a lack of "appropriate training and/or ineffective training of personnel for assigned roles and responsibilities" contributed to data quality issues. LEA SIS managers mentioned in data validation interviews that they do not receive adequate training from their SIS vendors for new employees, particularly for registrars. It is difficult for the USBE to provide high-quality training because of limited capacity and the fact that LEAs use multiple vendors with different systems. Thus, LEA SIS managers often rely on vendor-provided training, which can be an additional expense and may not be tailored to Utah-specific data submission requirements. This can make it difficult for new employees to understand the nuances of their roles. One LEA SIS manager noted in a data validation interview that they had to train three new registrars in recent years, expressing frustration that there was no beginning registrar training available from their vendor. They explained that this added significantly to their staff training costs and time.

These personnel challenges can lead to serious repercussions for data quality and data security. For example, LEA SIS managers who lack sufficient knowledge about data fields may be unable to properly train staff that enter data. Similarly, LEA SIS managers who lack sufficient training about system configurations may be unable to properly manage data permissions exposing an LEA to unintended or unauthorized data disclosures.

Ultimately, underqualified, undertrained or unmotivated LEA personnel pose a significant risk to both data quality and security.

Lack of Effective Communication

Communication regarding data and data-related policies exists between the Legislature, the Utah State Board of Education, and LEAs, but the necessary depth and breadth of understanding for complicated policies and procedures are not always fully communicated or understood.

The USBE LEA Data Communication

In some instances communication from the Utah State Board of Education does not reach the intended individuals at LEAs. For example, according to an Internal Audit report (Data Reliability Audit – Graduation and Student Data (22-01-B)), the USBE instructed LEAs through various channels not to submit data for the new school year until a certain system had been rolled over. However, 12 LEAs still submitted new data, which were subsequently wiped and had to be restored.

From the LEA perspective, some SIS managers feel overwhelmed by existing responsibilities

to attend these two-and-a-half-hour data meetings where critical information is shared. One charter school LEA SIS manager noted during the data validation interviews that they have many responsibilities beyond managing the SIS and cannot commit to attending these meetings.

UTREx Error Feedback Delay

Delays in LEAs receiving feedback from the USBE on data issues can be a challenge. Currently, LEA SIS managers are required to upload data nightly through UTREx. These uploads can be large and time-consuming, sometimes taking hours to complete before errors and warnings are returned. This delay can distance personnel from the data they submitted and result in hundreds of errors and warnings at once.

To address this, the USIMS project is implementing a system that will provide near-instantaneous warnings and errors. This is being accomplished with the support of SIS vendors and the use of a national data standard and API. The new system will allow for more frequent, smaller data uploads, which will return fewer errors and warnings at a time for staff to address.

Unique LEA Configurations

A configuration refers to the specific setup and customization of software. LEAs often have unique configurations within their particular SIS. This includes defining data fields, customizing workflows, mapping data from local systems to state reporting requirements and setting user permissions and access levels.

While data quality issues are often caused by user error from individual inputting data, SIS configurations can also play a role in the quality of data LEAs submit to USBE. If an LEA SIS manager is unaware of how a data field should be configured to align best with state requirements, the information collected may be inaccurate or unusable for legislative or USBE reporting.

Incorrect configuration can also result in unauthorized access to student information. For example, if user permissions are not configured correctly, individuals may be granted access to data they do not need for their job function. Similarly, if the system is not properly configured to restrict data sharing with third-party applications or vendors, there is a risk that private student information could be improperly transmitted, leading to a privacy breach.

Additionally, if an LEA SIS manager does not have expertise in their SIS configurations, the LEA may miss out on functionality that they could otherwise utilize. Even veteran LEA SIS managers in DSRAC meetings expressed that there are likely functionalities that have not been enabled in their SIS due to lack of capacity. One such configuration identified by LEA SIS managers is establishing a test environment which would allow the LEA to create demo student accounts for testing and staff training purposes. Without knowing about this configuration option and the settings that must be established to enable it, the LEA loses an opportunity to use this valuable capability.

LEAs use different vendors and have unique configurations within their systems, so the task of supporting any LEAs with configuration level specific support or creating best practices is extremely difficult.

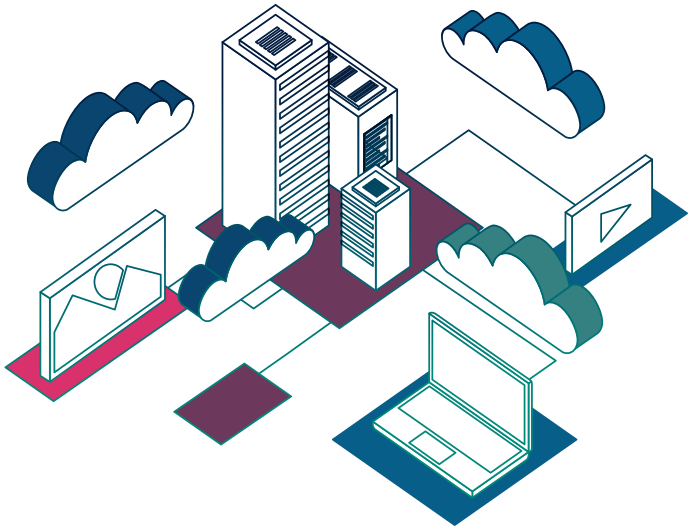
Lack of Clear Definitions in Data Collection

There is not always clarity around definitions in required data elements which can impact the accuracy and consistency of reporting. A data validation interview respondent offered an example of a recent law requiring LEAs to report whether a behavior incident was "alleged." A programmer for Aspire added a button to the SIS where users could flag when an incident was "alleged". But staff were confused about its meaning as the incident itself could be considered alleged, or the cause of the incident, such as bullying due to a disability. When the LEA SIS manager sought clarification from the USBE's Data and Statistics team, they were referred to the Aspire team. This team, in turn, referred them back to the USBE's behavioral specialists, and a clear answer was not found. This example exemplifies concerns over ultimate data stewardship. It is also not an issue unique to Aspire, particularly because other SIS vendors further removed from new legislation and changes must also make decisions about how to program data collection.

Unclear definitions like this one could be due to complicated and confusing rules/legislation, legal concerns, local control flexibility. This confusion can also lead to underreporting or inaccurate data. As one LEA SIS manager noted, while the UTREx specifications document is an invaluable resource, if a definition for a term cannot be found there, it is likely that no one at the USBE has a clear definition either. While LEAs often "figure it out" this can lead to inconsistent reporting across the state.

Legal Concerns

One of the reasons that unclear definitions may not be clarified by USBE staff is because USBE staff do not interpret the law on behalf of LEAs. USBE staff do not give LEAs legal advice on how to follow the law for their particular situations when laws are ambiguous.



Flexibility for Local Control

Definitions in education data, in some cases, are purposefully vague. This has allowed for local school boards or LEAs to make ultimate education decisions based on their own circumstances. For example, not all "school days" are equal with respect to length, learning, and instruction. Neither rule or Utah Code create a standard for how long a school day must be to count toward the 180-day requirement. This has resulted in one LEA allowing students to engage with their families in a "parent educational activity." While the activity was not supervised or approved by the school or the student's educators in advance, the LEA considered the activity a school day. Another example is "Lagoon Day" where students went to an amusement park. One school administrator commented that the pressure to keep the day was so great they could lose their job if they stopped it (Attendance Audit 25-01). Loose definitions allow for local control, but have significant impacts on data quality.

Lack of USBE Capacity for LEA Support

This report has identified a need for better LEA training and support, however the USBE does not currently have that capacity. The Internal Audit report (Data Reliability, Assessment Data (22-01-A) found that the number of full-time employees at the USBE, particularly for Data and Statistics, to support over 670,000 students, 30,000 educators and over 150 LEAs with approximately 40 assessments in multiple student systems and assessment systems with multiple vendors, may be insufficient given that critical mechanisms such as policymaking, funding, and, most importantly, student services are reliant on these data. During discussions with various LEA staff, they expressed frustration with the lack of availability of USBE staff to help correct issues that occur when updates to UTREx are rolled out.

One specific training for one LEA may not adequately train another LEA due to their unique configurations and vendors. Another consideration that adds significant time is the frequent stream of changes from the legislature or state board on data submission processes. These changes add another level of complexity that reinforces the idea that with current USBE staffing, this type of training would not be possible.

Time Inefficiencies

"...Being a small district, if I have to spend time on [my SIS] there are 3 things over here that I can't do."- LEA SIS Manager

Duplication of Efforts

Duplication of effort is a common issue for LEA SIS managers, as they often enter information into one system and then have to re-enter the same information into their SIS for submission to the USBE through UTREx. This is particularly true for LEAs that use third-party applications, such as behavior management software, or schools that rely on systems outside their SIS for enrollment. Several LEA SIS managers mentioned in data validation interviews that they use a third-party application for their Early Warning System and, when reporting on student behaviors, they would only input a subset of the behavior information into their SIS. One LEA SIS manager noted that this can lead to discrepancies, citing an example where a school only reported the minimum reporting threshold to the USBE. This was flagged by the USBE because it seemed like the LEA was suspending students with few other behavior incidents. The minimum reporting threshold did not provide an accurate picture of all behavioral incidents.

Manually Creating Reports

Similarly, some reports which all LEAs are required to submit yearly or every other year are not simple to generate from their SIS. Despite the uniform nature of these reporting requirements throughout the state, some SIS vendors do not provide pre-built reports. As a result, each LEA SIS manager must manually customize the reports for their specific LEA. This practice is time-consuming and inefficient. Two LEA Data Managers mentioned the federal CRDC reporting requirements as a particularly time consuming report, which must be filed by every LEA in the country. Despite this, some vendors do not have a way to easily pull this information for the report.

SIS Vendors Concerns

Limited Support Collaboration Between the USBE and SIS Vendors

Currently, LEAs hold their own contracts with their SIS vendors. They negotiate terms and payment. This means that the USBE does not have contract insight, leverage or formal communication mechanisms with SIS vendors. This presents a challenge as vendors may not be motivated to collaborate with the USBE, and the USBE is not always motivated to collaborate with vendors.

When UTREx errors occur, USBE staff can only identify the error messages. The USBE cannot help LEAs with system configurations or specific issues. Currently the USBE does not have login credentials to directly support LEAs within their specific SIS when data problems arise. As a result, LEA SIS managers have reported being caught in an unproductive and frustrating cycle. In some cases the LEA goes to the USBE for help, are told the USBE cannot assist and then go to their SIS vendor, who subsequently blames the problem on the USBE. This leaves some LEAs to resolve complex issues on their own.

When there are repeated LEA validation issues with an SIS, USBE does not currently report information to the SIS vendor, for example, sharing that all LEAs were experiencing the same errors.

SIS Vendor "Approval" Process

While there is an approval process where LEAs can apply to the USBE on behalf of their SIS vendor, this process lacks rigor and ongoing accountability. In addition, this approval is only required when an LEA is adopting a new SIS or if a system is undergoing a significant change.

The requirements outlined in the current rule are not especially rigorous. The Utah Administrative Rule R277-484 states that the Superintendent shall maintain a list of approved SISs. Before the Superintendent grants approval, an LEA must submit a written request the year before implementation and provide documentation that the new or modified SIS is SIF certified. SIF certification ensures that the vendor's system is able to interoperate with USBE. Finally the LEA must provide documentation that the vendor can meet the UTREx specifications for data submissions and eTranscripts and submit files to ensure the new SIS can generate valid data and a Statewide Student Identifier (SSID) request file.

Additionally, the relevant Utah Code § 53E-3-521 states that all of an LEA's data systems must be fully compatible with USIMS and meet specification standards determined by the USBE. These requirements ensure vendor compatibility with USIMS but are not specific enough to provide the USBE leverage over vendors.

The USBE focuses their effort on ensuring validation at the LEA level. The USBE has no formal mechanism to ensure that vendors continue to meet standards after LEA's initial request for SIS vendor approval. The USBE does not have formal internal policies and procedures to ensure a SIS is rigorously evaluated before it is implemented by an LEA. Neither does the USBE regularly evaluate LEA SISs for on-going eligibility. This absence of continuous oversight means there are no checks in place to ensure that vendors consistently uphold high standards or continue to meet requirements, which can create a risk for LEAs and the data they manage.

Vendor Issues

While most LEAs reported in the Qualtrics survey findings that they are satisfied with their SIS overall, there are many LEAs who have concerns with their vendors which can present data quality and system efficiency issues.

Third-Party Integrations

Third-party integrations are a major point of frustration for LEA SIS managers. While most LEAs are satisfied with their SIS overall, better integration with third-party platforms was the most common complaint from data validation survey respondents when asked their biggest frustration with their SIS.

LEAs choose to use third-party tools for a variety of reasons, including cost, usability, or additional capabilities, even when their primary SIS offers similar functionality. While some of these integrations work well, others do not, which can have serious repercussions for students, parents, and teachers.

Functional integration with the Canvas learning management system, for example, can reduce double entry time for staff and allow quick changes when students are enrolled or moved. When learning management systems are flowing information well grades are uploaded accurately to SIS and teachers do not have to double check entries. However, when these integrations are not functioning properly the ramifications can affect almost every staff member in the LEA.

Customer Service

Vendor issues are not limited to integrations. Poor customer service was the second most common frustration reported by LEA SIS managers in data validation interviews. A USBE internal audit revealed that one LEA was aware of an issue where their SIS was not properly reporting absences due to suspension throughout the entire school year (Data Reliability Audit – Graduation and Student Data (22-01-B). The LEA worked with the vendor, but the problem was not fixed by the time of the End-of-Year submission. For purposes of the audit, the LEA did not provide data stating the following, “I can send you the “Absences Due to Suspension” if you want. But they are WRONG!” Interestingly, a different LEA using the same SIS was completely unaware of the issue until it was brought to their attention during an onsite visit. A “known issue” for one LEA may not be communicated to others using the same system by their vendor.

One charter school LEA SIS manager shared another example in a data validation interview. They reported that their vendor had not fixed a broken emergency messaging system for two years, forcing them to spend additional money on a third party solution to ensure they could communicate with families in an emergency. These examples highlight the implications of a lack of consistent communication and support from some vendors.

Legislation/Rule Data Change Implementation

The legislative process drives many of the changes that impact SIS. New legislation sets off a chain of changes in USBE administrative rules, data collection processes, and SIS capabilities. However, this process faces significant challenges that can impact both timelines for implementation and data integrity.

When new legislation is drafted, data collection experts are not often consulted, and their concerns may not be prioritized over other program goals. This oversight can create a disconnect, as data collection changes that rely on SIS data typically require a year or more for proper implementation. These implementation needs and their associated costs are also frequently not included in fiscal notes, which makes it difficult for policymakers to accurately assess the full financial impact of a bill. Without clear fiscal and timeline data, the real costs and time required for implementation can lead to unforeseen frustrations and complications for LEAs and policy makers.

LEAs and Vendors Responsible for Changes

Currently, when a data change is required from legislation, it gets filtered through a number of the USBE subject matter experts and then to the USBE team responsible for the UTREx submissions. This team communicates these changes to LEAs through the UTREx Specifications document, SIS LEA manager meetings and/or emails. Then it is up to the LEAs to ensure that their vendor is making the proper changes into their SIS.

While many SIS LEA managers are informed about the changes from the USBE, they do not always understand the nuances to advise their SIS on the best possible implementation of any given change. This is partially due to the fact that these LEA SIS managers are often many steps removed from the rule or legislative change and its original intention or purpose.

UTREx Specification Document

A USBE Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for updating the UTREx Specification Manual indicates that the USBE aims to provide LEAs with 18 months or more to accurately report data before new requirements become final and generate fatal errors. Initially, new data fields may only trigger a warning. The SOP notes that "The first year a field often has low or poor quality reporting as a result of [the lag between changes in UTREx and in the SIS] (as well as communication issues…)." It further states that it can take a full two years to achieve better data quality in a new field. This suggests that the USBE does not expect data to be accurate or complete for up to two years after a new reporting requirement is introduced.

In a recent internal audit (Data Reliability Audit – Graduation and Student Data (22-01-B)), LEA SIS managers expressed frustration about not being notified of updates to the UTREx Specification Manual. They reported having to undertake significant efforts to correct issues caused by these sporadic updates, adding to their workload and contributing to data quality challenges. The USBE's practice of a phased implementation for new data requirements, while potentially intended to ease the transition, may also contribute to a period of inaccurate or incomplete data submissions. However, due to the frequency of new data requests and the complexities involved with implementing them into SIS, a transition period or implementation period is essential.

Short Timelines for Implementation

A key challenge in the implementation of new legislation is the disconnect between legislative timelines and the practical realities of updating SISs. Because LEAs are responsible for communicating new data requirements to their specific SIS vendors, there can be a variety of interpretations of legislative mandates. This can lead to inconsistencies in the data collected

across different LEAs, particularly when legislation isn't explicit about what data elements need to be reported and how they should be collected. To ensure a new data collection is implemented properly—accounting for internal procedures, staff training, and necessary software development—it often requires a year or more. However, many bills have an implementation date of July of the same year they are passed, which severely shortens this critical window and can cause significant data collection problems.

A clear example of this issue is the Utah Fits All (UFA) scholarship program, which required eligible students to un-enroll from public LEAs. The law also encouraged LEAs to become providers for UFA students and provide services to them. However, some LEA SISs were not equipped to capture this nuance of students being included in their SIS without being enrolled in the LEA. Program managers struggled to differentiate between students who were fully enrolled in the public LEA and those who were only receiving UFA services through the LEA. While not the only issue, the SIS capability problem could have been avoided with sufficient lead time to plan, develop, and roll out the necessary system updates.

Another illustration is the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (SEBT) program, which required the collection of student addresses. This data wasn't previously collected by the USBE and had to be highly accurate, which ultimately caused schools to submit longitude and latitude coordinates. This became a significant and unforeseen burden on schools and underscores the challenges that arise when new requirements are introduced without adequate planning or a sufficient implementation period.

This inability to track new data can compromise data integrity and frustrate a legislative bill's original purpose. As one LEA SIS manager noted, "There needs to be some checks and balances as to what [the USBE and legislators] asked for and when… Don't just throw things out there because you think you need to understand and know. That data creates a huge burden for our districts". These examples demonstrate that without sufficient lead time for development and implementation, even well-intentioned legislation can face significant challenges in practice.

Student Data Transferring

Utah's emphasis on school choice, supported by programs like the UFA, has led to a highly mobile student population. Students now have more flexibility to attend different LEAs regardless of location, and can even split their time between multiple educational settings, such as public schools and home-based or private online programs. While this provides students with a wide range of educational options, it also results in more frequent student transfers between schools.

This high student mobility creates a significant burden on LEA staff regarding student data transfer. One LEA interviewed for the data validation interviews estimated that each student transfer takes 10 to 20 minutes of manual effort, with the time increasing significantly for students with an IEP. Despite this effort, the transferred data often does not capture all the student data an LEA has. For some LEAs this is a manual process, which increases the risk of data entry errors. One LEA SIS manager noted in a data validation interview, that when new ninth-grade students enroll, registrars must hand-enter transcripts, which can lead to mistakes like a "B" being entered instead of an "A." This inefficiency and potential for error are particularly frustrating when the student's transcript data already exists at the state level but cannot be easily transferred to the LEA's system.

Examples of SIS Solutions in Other States

Over the past ten years, a number of states have either considered some form of a statewide SIS solution and fifteen have implemented or are in the process of implementing one. Many other states have taken different approaches in order to reap similar benefits of streamlining reporting, improving data quality and maximizing cost-efficiency. A number of studies have been conducted by states to determine a path forward like, Colorado's Value Assessment of a Statewide SIS, Connecticut's Statewide Student Information System: A Feasibility Report or Kansas' Cost-utility Analysis of Student Information System Implementation Models.

One Statewide SIS

Models of Statewide SIS Implementation:

Several states have adopted a centralized, state-procured, and funded model where all districts are required to use the same SIS.

Kentucky

Since 2006, Kentucky has used Infinite Campus as its statewide SIS. The state first moved to a single statewide SIS in 1997 and has had a mobile app for parents and students to access real-time data since 2010. Kentucky's current contract with Infinite Campus is set to expire in 2027 (Kentucky Department of Education).

North Carolina

From 2014 to 2025, North Carolina utilized PowerSchool as its single statewide SIS, with a three-year transition plan that began in 2014. In 2023, the state decided to transition to Infinite Campus, with a two-year implementation timeline. The initial phase of this transition involved 20 LEAs for the 2024-2025 school year with the remaining LEAs scheduled to transition during the 2025-2026 school year. This migration includes a robust support team with two liaisons,

one for the Department of Public Instruction and one for LEAs, along with a team of five regional SIS coordinators. This contract includes online registration, data suite, analytics, professional development, event tools, communication system and school payment functionality (North Carolina DPI).

Delaware

Delaware recently awarded a ten-year contract to Infinite Campus for a statewide SIS, with the possibility of a five-year extension. This decision came after a two-year process that included a Request for Proposals (RFPs), a nine-month period to collect system functionality requirements and technical specifications, and an evaluation by a ten-member panel. The contract covers licensing, hosting, technical support, training, online registration, special education management, communication system, and school payment functionality (Delaware DOE).

Key Considerations for One SIS

The experiences of other states highlight three key factors that are critical to the success of a statewide SIS implementation: financial commitment, LEA staff support, and state-level capacity.

Financial Commitment

While a statewide SIS can lead to long-term savings, it requires a substantial upfront financial commitment for the implementation and a dedicated annual budget for maintenance. North Carolina's approach required a dedicated funding commitment of several million dollars annually for an uninterrupted implementation. As shown by Delaware's ten-year contract with Infinite Campus, the significant costs of switching SIS incentivizes long, stable contracts.

LEA Staff Support

Transitioning to a new system is not just a technical change but an organizational one. It requires a planned approach to manage change, secure LEA buy-in from the early stages of vendor selection and provide extensive targeted training for all end-users, including teachers, students, and parents.

Stakeholder Engagement

Other states' studies and implementations suggest that a single SIS is a collaborative effort that requires ongoing engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including the legislature, LEA SIS managers, and communities. North Carolina staff have shared that early on district support and involvement was crucial in selecting a vendor to meet district needs (Connecticut State Board of Education). The Colorado Department of Education's study of the implementations of statewide SIS (Colorado Department of Education Assessment) found that states with the smoothest transitions have effective communication, executive support, and well-defined stakeholder expectations.

Opt-In Models

Some states allow LEAs to opt-in to a centralized model where the state provides a platform and LEAs have the choice to use it. This model can be used when statewide funding is not available, and costs are split with or fully paid for by LEAs. Economies of scale can still sometimes be achieved in this model. States like Nevada and Arkansas use elements of this type of model.

Arkansas

In Arkansas, the state uses a PowerSchool product to manage district-level data when LEAs also use PowerSchool products such as "StudentPlus/eSchoolPlus" and "FinancePlus". While a few LEAs have opted to use other systems, they are still required to meet certain minimum capabilities. These capabilities include daily and class attendance, course scheduling, report cards and permanent records, special education, health, discipline, and other demographic and program information deemed necessary by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) (The Arkansas SIS Handbook, 2022).

Data Standards Approach

States such as Wisconsin, Nebraska, and Michigan have improved data management and interoperability by using data and transport standards without implementing a single, mandatory statewide SIS. This approach focuses on standardizing data exchange between different systems rather than consolidating all LEAs onto a single platform.

SIS Potential Recommendations

The Data Systems and Reporting Advisory committee spent several weeks detailing concerns, reviewing data results and brainstorming solutions. Ultimately the committee determined four possible overarching solutions to the issues faced by SISs in Utah:

1. Status Quo with SIS Vendor Requirements
2. Approved SIS Vendor Choice with USBE Support
3. Small Group of Approved SIS Vendors
4. Single Statewide SIS

While the committee discussed the following four recommendations, the majority supported a solution that would allow approved SIS vendor Choice with USBE Support. The remaining discussed recommendations are nevertheless provided below.

For each potential solution suggested rule changes can be found in Appendix E, suggested legislative changes can be found in Appendix F and financial estimates can be found in Appendix G - Appendex H.

Additional Requirements and Minimum Capabilities for SIS Vendors

All recommendation options include additional requirements for SIS vendors and minimum capabilities that all SIS vendors should be able to meet. These additional requirements are an effort to hold SIS vendors to high standards which can improve data quality, ensure smoother transitions for required modifications to a SIS from code or rule and support LEA needs. In all plans failure to meet these requirements or minimum capabilities may result in losing the vendor's "approved"

status, which is not currently a mechanism used by the USBE. Board rule will be needed to further articulate a process by which there will be notice provided by USBE to the vendor and provide a designated period of time to cure deficiencies.

These additional requirements include:

1. SIS Vendor must be USBE compliant
    a. Must be capable of sending to and receiving from USBE
    b. Must be capable of adhering to USBE data standards
    c. Must be capable of incremental data updates near real time
2. SIS Vendor must communicate with USBE staff
    a. Must specify a point of contact within organization for USBE communication
    b. Must be available to meet regularly, as specified by the USBE, with USBE staff
3. SIS Vendor must be responsive to rule and code changes
    a. Must adhere to changes within USBE timelines
    b. Must provide high quality training and documentation consistent with Utah-specifications for LEAs
4. SIS Vendor-LEA relations
    a. Must inform LEAs and the USBE of planned major software updates
    b. Must be responsive to data issues within a reasonable timeline.

The minimum capabilities include:

1. Online Registration
2. Online Parent Consent Forms
3. Meet the Student Data Backpack Requirements
4. Support integrations or SIS functionality for IEP management, health records, messaging, LMS interoperability, Human Resources, Responses to Intervention (RTI), food service, Early Warning System, scheduling and assessment data tracking.

1. Status Quo with Additional Requirements

Plan Details

This plan maintains the current model where LEAs choose and pay for their own SIS vendors who must comply with existing state requirements but introduces additional vendor requirements and minimum capabilities. Failure to meet these requirements or minimum capabilities may result in losing the vendor's "approved" status, which is not currently a mechanism used by the USBE.

Plan for Aspire

The existing Aspire system would be maintained and updated as a free or low-cost system available to any interested LEA. The expectation would be that Aspire is updated in line with the additional requirements and minimum capabilities required by all approved SIS vendors.

USIMS Implications

This plan would have a minimal impact on the USIMS transition as USIMS is currently working with all vendors on transition plans.

Addressing Limitations of the Current SIS Landscape

Limitations of the Current SIS Landscape	Impact of the Solution: Status Quo with Additional Requirements
LEA Personnel Challenges	Required vendor created Utah-specific training
Lack of Effective Communication • USBE-LEA Data Communication • UTREx Error Feedback Delay • Unique LEA Configurations	Vendors required to discuss legislative/rule SIS changes with the USBE
Lack of Clear Definitions in Data Collection	• Required vendor and USBE communication on implementation of legislative/rule SIS changes for clearer definition • Required vendor created Utah-specific training could improve clarity and uniformity in Utah data
Lack of USBE Capacity for LEA Support	Unaffected; no capacity for enforcing SIS vendor additional requirements at the USBE
Time Inefficiencies • Duplication of Efforts • Manually Creating Reports	Vendors required to support essential integrations with their SIS, which will eliminate some LEAs from needing to double enter information
SIS Vendor Concerns • Limited USBE-SIS Collaboration • Weak SIS “Approval” Process • Vendor Issues of Integrations and Customer Service	• Vendors required to communicate regularly with LEAs and the USBE • The SIS approval process will be strengthened • Vendor issues could result in removal from the approved list

Limitations of the Current SIS Landscape	Impact of the Solution: Status Quo with Additional Requirements
Legislation/Rule Data Change Implementation • UTREx Specifications Document • LEA-Vendor Responsibility for Implementation • Short Timelines	• Additional clarity for legislative/rule modifications from increased USBE and vendor communication • More time before implementation of education data to improve the data quality as implementation is rolled out slowly, methodically and with thorough communication
Student Data Transferring	Unaffected, USIMS will continue to work towards the student data backpack

2. LEA Vendor Choice with USBE Support

Plan Details

This plan allows LEAs to choose SIS vendors from the list of USBE approved vendors. These vendors may be approved as long as they comply with additional requirements and minimum capabilities. Failure to meet these requirements or minimum capabilities may result in losing the vendor's "approved" status. This plan also introduces additional USBE support and maintains Aspire for LEAs.

Vendor Accountability, LEA Support

The USBE would establish an SIS team of 3-5 people. This team would include vendor compliance and policy liaisons.

Vendor Compliance

- Work with vendors on legislative or rule changes affecting SIS to ensure high quality data and uniform interpretations of changes
- Attend user groups to support roll out of changes and stay up-to-date on current issues experienced by users
- Communicate regularly with LEAs to ensure high quality data is being submitted and work with LEAs and vendors to facilitate the correction of any systematic issues
- Ensure vendors are creating high quality, Utah-specific training materials.

This team would rely heavily on the SIS vendors to provide quality training and be collaborative partners. This team would advocate on behalf of LEAs to ensure that SIS vendors were fulfilling their contracts, requirements and minimum capabilities.

Data-Policy Liaison

- Work to support accurate understanding of data practices with the legislature and the USBE
- Check that data is interpreted inline with LEA's current definitions
- Proactively support lawmakers in their creation of laws, informing them about data that is available and the implications of new data requests
- Interpret new legislation impacting data collection and support the translation of data changes into SIS requirements

Plan for Aspire

The existing Aspire system would be maintained and updated as a free or low-cost system available to any interested LEA. The expectation would be that Aspire is updated in line with the additional requirements and minimum capabilities required by all approved SIS vendors.

USIMS Implications

This plan would have a minimal impact on the USIMS transition as USIMS is currently working with all vendors on transition plans.

Addressing Limitations of the Current SIS Landscape

Limitations of the Current SIS Landscape	Impact of the Solution: Status Quo with Additional Requirements
LEA Personnel Challenges	• Required vendor-created Utah-specific training • USBE staff to ensure quality and availability of these trainings • USBE staff to be resources with in-depth SIS knowledge for LEAs
Lack of Effective Communication • USBE-LEA Data Communication • UTREx Error Feedback Delay • Unique LEA Configurations	• Vendors required to discuss legislative/rule SIS changes with the USBE • USBE staff knowledgeable about LEA configurations would provide insight to support LEAs with best practices and implementation of USBE policy
Lack of Clear Definitions in Data Collection	• Required vendor and USBE communication on implementation of legislative/rule SIS changes for clearer definitions • Required vendor-created Utah-specific training to improve clarity and uniformity in Utah data

Limitations of the Current SIS Landscape	Impact of the Solution: Status Quo with Additional Requirements
Lack of Clear Definitions in Data Collection	• USBE staff to ensure the quality of trainings and implementation of definitions into the SIS
Lack of USBE Capacity for LEA Support	• Increased USBE capacity to support LEAs specifically with their SIS • Increased USBE capacity to support legislators with education data • Increased USBE capacity to ensure high data quality
Time Inefficiencies • Duplication of Efforts • Manually Creating Reports	• Vendors required to support essential integrations with their SIS, which will eliminate some LEAs from needing to double enter information • USBE staff to ensure minimum capabilities
SIS Vendor Concerns • Limited USBE-SIS Collaboration • Weak SIS “Approval” Process • Vendor Issues of Integrations and Customer Service	• Vendors required to communicate regularly with LEAs and the USBE • The SIS approval process leveraged through additional requirements and USBE staff to enforce • Vendor issues could result in removal from the approved list • USBE staff to conduct regular checks of vendors
Legislation/Rule Data Change Implementation • UTREx Specifications Document • LEA-Vendor Responsibility for Implementation • Short Timelines	• Additional clarity for legislative/rule modifications from increased USBE and vendor communication • More time before implementation of education data to alleviate the burden of short timelines • More time before implementation of education data to improve the data quality as implementation is rolled out slowly, methodically and with thorough communication
Student Data Transferring	Unaffected, USIMS will continue to work towards the student data backpack

3. Small Group of Approved SIS Vendors

Plan Details

This plan allows LEAs to choose SIS vendors from a list of no more than 4 USBE approved vendors. These vendors should be chosen with a diverse group of stakeholder input. This plan is state-procured and state-paid, with the USBE and LEAs having cooperative contracts. This plan also introduces additional USBE support.

Vendor Accountability, LEA Support

The USBE would establish an SIS team of 3-5 people. This team would include vendor compliance and policy liaisons. Additionally, this team would be required for supporting the rollout of the new SIS.

Vendor Compliance

- Work with vendors on legislative or rule changes affecting SIS to ensure high quality data and uniform interpretations of changes
- Work with vendors to ensure that LEAs are receiving proper transition support, planning and communication
- Attend user groups to support roll out of changes and stay up-to-date on current issues experienced by users
- Communicate regularly with LEAs to ensure high quality data is being submitted and work with LEAs and the vendor to facilitate the correction of any systematic issues
- Ensure vendors are creating high quality, Utah-specific training materials.

This team would rely heavily on the SIS vendors to provide quality training and be collaborative partners. This team would advocate on behalf of LEAs to ensure that SIS vendors were fulfilling their contracts, requirements and minimum capabilities.

Data-Policy Liaison

- Work to support accurate understanding of data practices with the legislature and the USBE
- Check that data is interpreted inline with LEA's current definitions
- Proactively support lawmakers in their creation of laws, informing them about data that is available and the implications of new data requests
- Interpret new legislation impacting data collection and support the translation of data changes into SIS requirements

Timeline

A transition period of at least five years would be provided to allow current LEA contracts to expire.

Plan for Aspire

The existing Aspire system would be discontinued.

USIMS Implications

This plan would simplify the USIMS transition as USIMS is currently working with all vendors on transition plans and would be able to focus efforts on a smaller number of vendors.

Addressing Limitations of the Current SIS Landscape

Limitations of the Current SIS Landscape	Impact of the Solution: Status Quo with Additional Requirements
LEA Personnel Challenges	• Required vendor-created Utah-specific training • USBE staff to ensure quality and availability of these trainings • USBE staff to be resources with in-depth SIS knowledge for LEAs • Cost of switching LEA staff to a new SIS, loss of previous expertise • With fewer SIS vendors, LEAs could share more resources and training
Lack of Effective Communication • USBE-LEA Data Communication • UTREx Error Feedback Delay • Unique LEA Configurations	• Vendors required to discuss legislative/rule SIS changes with USBE • USBE staff knowledgeable about LEA configurations would provide insight to support LEAs with best practices and implementation of USBE policy • Simplified with a small group of vendors
Lack of Clear Definitions in Data Collection	• Required vendor and USBE communication on implementation of legislative/rule SIS changes for clearer definitions • Required vendor-created Utah-specific training to improve clarity and uniformity in Utah data • USBE staff to ensure the quality of training and implementation of definitions into the SIS • Simplified with fewer SIS vendors to work with

Limitations of the Current SIS Landscape	Impact of the Solution: Status Quo with Additional Requirements
Lack of USBE Capacity for LEA Support	• Increased USBE capacity to support LEAs specifically with their SIS • Increased USBE capacity to support legislators with education data • Increased USBE capacity to ensure high data quality
Time Inefficiencies • Duplication of Efforts • Manually Creating Reports	• Vendors required to support essential integrations with their SIS, which will eliminate some LEAs from needing to double enter information • USBE staff to ensure minimum capabilities
SIS Vendor Concerns • Limited USBE-SIS Collaboration • Weak SIS “Approval” Process • Vendor Issues of Integrations and Customer Service	• Vendors required to communicate regularly with LEAs and USBE • SIS approval process leveraged through additional requirements and USBE staff to enforce • Vendor issues could result in removal from the approved list • USBE staff conduct regular checks of vendors
Legislation/Rule Data Change Implementation • UTREx Specifications Document • LEA-Vendor Responsibility for Implementation • Short Timelines	• Additional clarity for legislative/rule modifications from increased USBE and vendor communication • More time before implementation of education data to alleviate the burden of short timelines • More time before implementation of education data to improve the data quality as implementation is rolled out slowly, methodically and with thorough communication • Simplified with fewer SIS vendors
Student Data Transferring	Slight simplification with fewer vendors, USIMS will continue to work towards the student data backpack

4. Single Statewide SIS

Plan Details

This plan proposes that all LEAs in Utah transition to a single, state-procured and state-paid SIS. The USBE would hold the contract and manage the system centrally. Any implementation plans or Request for Proposal (RFP) process must include a diverse group of stakeholder input. LEAs would have the option of hosting the system on-premise if they demonstrate adequate capability and infrastructure. This plan also introduces additional USBE support.

Vendor Accountability, LEA Support

The USBE would establish an SIS team of 3-5 people. This team would include vendor compliance and policy liaisons. Additionally, this team would be required for supporting the rollout of the new SIS.

Vendor Compliance

- Work with the vendor on legislative or rule changes affecting the SIS to ensure high quality data and uniform interpretations of changes
- Work with the vendor to ensure that LEAs are receiving proper transition support, planning and communication
- Facilitate a user group meeting to support roll out of changes and stay up-to-date on current issues experienced by users
- Communicate regularly with LEAs to ensure high quality data is being submitted and work with LEAs and the vendor to facilitate the correction of any systematic issues
- Ensure the vendor is creating high quality, Utah-specific training materials

This team would rely heavily on the SIS vendor to provide quality training and be a collaborative partner. This team would advocate on behalf of LEAs to ensure that the SIS vendor was fulfilling their contracts, requirements and minimum capabilities.

Data-Policy Liaison

- Work to support accurate understanding of data practices with the legislature and the USBE
- Check that data is interpreted inline with LEA's current definitions
- Proactively support lawmakers in their creation of laws, informing them about data that is available and the implications of new data requests
- Interpret new legislation impacting data collection and support the translation of data changes into the SIS requirements

Implementation Considerations

A transition period of at least five years would be provided to allow current LEA contracts to expire. Additional funding should also be made available at the LEA level for those LEAs that may not have capacity to facilitate this transition. The SIS contract should be the maximum duration allowed under procurement law because of the significant cost to switching systems.

Plan for Aspire

The existing Aspire system would be discontinued.

USIMS Implications

This plan would simplify the USIMS transition as USIMS is currently working with all vendors on transition plans and would be able to focus efforts on only one vendor.

Addressing Limitations of the Current SIS Landscape

Limitations of the Current SIS Landscape	Impact of the Solution: Status Quo with Additional Requirements
LEA Personnel Challenges	• Consolidation of training and resources under one SIS • USBE staff to ensure quality and availability of these trainings • USBE staff to be resources with in-depth SIS knowledge for LEAs • Cost of switching LEA staff to a new SIS, dramatic loss of previous expertise • One SIS would require most of LEA staff to be newly trained
Lack of Effective Communication • USBE-LEA Data Communication • UTREx Error Feedback Delay • Unique LEA Configurations	• Vendors required to discuss legislative/rule SIS changes with the USBE • USBE staff knowledgeable about LEA configurations would provide insight to support LEAs with best practices and implementation of USBE policy • Simplified with one SIS vendor
Lack of Clear Definitions in Data Collection	• Required vendor and USBE communication on implementation of legislative/rule SIS changes for clearer definitions • Required vendor-created Utah-specific training to improve clarity and uniformity in Utah data • USBE staff to ensure the quality of training and implementation of definitions into the SIS • Simplified with one SIS vendor

Limitations of the Current SIS Landscape	Impact of the Solution: Status Quo with Additional Requirements
Lack of USBE Capacity for LEA Support	• Increased USBE capacity to support LEAs • Increased LEA needs with a massive switching of SIS may result in additional needs not satisfied by the increase in staff • Increased USBE capacity to support legislators with education data • Increased USBE capacity to ensure high data quality
Time Inefficiencies • Duplication of Efforts • Manually Creating Reports	• Vendor required to support essential integrations with their SIS, which will eliminate some LEAs from needing to double enter information • RFP process to ensure optimal capabilities which could lead to additional time efficiencies
SIS Vendor Concerns • Limited USBE-SIS Collaboration • Weak SIS “Approval” Process • Vendor Issues of Integrations and Customer Service	• Vendor required to communicate regularly with LEAs and the USBE • The SIS RFP process leveraged for optimal pricing and capabilities • Vendor issues could result in loss of contract for next bid • USBE staff conduct regular checks of vendor
Legislation/Rule Data Change Implementation • UTREx Specifications Document • LEA-Vendor Responsibility for Implementation • Short Timelines	• Additional clarity for legislative/rule modifications from increased USBE and vendor communication • More time before implementation of education data to alleviate the burden of short timelines • More time before implementation of education data to improve the data quality as implementation is rolled out slowly, methodically and with thorough communication • Simplified with one SIS vendor

Limitations of the Current SIS Landscape	Impact of the Solution: Status Quo with Additional Requirements
Student Data Transferring	Simplified, as data transfers take place more easily within the same SIS

Additional Stakeholder Insight

LEA Vendor Choices

Overwhelmingly, LEA SIS managers reported in the Qualtrics survey that they were satisfied with their SIS. LEAs routinely reassess their SIS contracts and some make necessary system changes thoughtfully and carefully as it represents a significant change for school processes and staff, student and parent experiences. Many LEAs have been in their respective systems for over 20 years, building deep reservoirs of system knowledge. During data validation interviews, while many LEAs expressed their commitment to high quality data, many believed that solutions could be found within a diverse vendor landscape and few blamed data issues on their SIS vendor, citing rather lack of clear definitions, quick legislative implementation timelines and lack of capacity.

USBE Legislative Data Support Staff

Even an experienced SIS manager of a large LEA mentioned their difficulty navigating legislative implementation with their SIS vendor. Although they did not fault their vendor, they found it difficult to interpret legislation into SIS configurations appropriately. Regardless of how in tune a LEA SIS manager may be with education legislation, they can still be removed from a legislator's intention and USBE implementation plans. These concerns are amplified with inexperienced SIS managers in small LEAs, who are still responsible for working with their vendors to ensure compliance with the law. Additionally in data validation interviews many LEA SIS managers felt the breadth and complexity of their work was misunderstood by the legislature when implementation timelines required tight turn-arounds or specific variations on already collected information.

Many DSRAC committee members agreed that USBE staff could bridge the gap between the state and SIS, smoothing the transition when modifications are required in SIS from legislation or rule.

SIS Vendor Switching Costs

Overwhelmingly, LEA SIS managers in DSRAC and data validation interviews expressed that switching SIS vendors would cause major disruptions to their LEAs. They worried about the costs and logistical challenges of another switch after a 5 or 10-year contract. Some urged policymakers to keep in mind that SIS changes impact every member of staff, administrator, teacher, student and parent. Charter school SIS managers, in particular, voiced concerns that a single statewide SIS might not meet their unique needs. The following quotes from data validation interviews articulate some concerns LEA SIS managers anticipate if asked to switch SIS.

"Having just switched… it was a lot of work for me. I spent eight to ten hours a day, four days a week for two months just doing my part of it. It is a lot of work to switch SIS… it was not something that I care to do ever. It was stressful and just a lot of work. I'm really not doing it again… I still get gripes from staff, not just teachers, but all administrative staff, too" - LEA SIS manager who recently switched SIS

"Switching SIS would be like performing open heart surgery in an open convertible going down the highway…. probably in the rain" - LEA SIS manager

Stakeholder Buy-In

A number of LEA SIS managers were confused about the purpose of the statewide SIS discussion. Many felt that they were already reporting data accurately and consistently, and they did not understand the problems the legislature was trying to solve. As was reported earlier, few felt that their vendor is the root of the main issues they experience. This sentiment creates a potential obstacle to community buy-in, which is a key factor in the successful implementation of a statewide SIS or a switch to a consolidated number of SIS.

Final Recommendation

The final recommendation of the Data Systems and Reporting Advisory Committee is solution 2: LEA Vendor Choice with USBE Support.

Committee Votes:

- LEA Vendor Choice with USBE Support: 8 votes
- Single Statewide SIS: 6 votes
- Small Group Approved Vendors: 5 votes
- Status Quo with Requirements: 3 votes
- Rank choice voting was used to ensure that there was a simple majority. To reach this majority, two options were eliminated and below are the final vote totals.
- LEA Vendor Choice with USBE Support: 14 votes
- Single Statewide SIS: 8 votes

Appendix A: Data Systems and Reporting Advisory Committee Membership

Role	Appointed Individual
Representative from the Department of Administrative Services	Maren Peterson
District or charter school technology director	• David Williams, Davis • Melisa Richardson, Logan City
District or charter school designated data manager	• Jim Black, Washington County • Caleb Olson, Jordan • Emily Bejarano, Academica West Charter
District or charter school designated information security officer	Jason Eyre, Murray
District or charter school appointed records officer	• JaDean Frehner, InTech Collegiate Academy Charter • Stacie Gomm, Cache County • Scot McCombs, Canyons
District or charter school legal counsel	Ben Onofrio, Davis
District or charter school business administrators	Misty Biesinger, Greenwood Charter
Other	• Tracy Nuttall, Former Legislative Attorney • Steven Harwood, Jordan • Eric Ferrin, Nebo • Logan Staheli, Iron County • Jonathon English, San Juan
Utah School Superintendents Association/Utah School Boards Association Representative	Ben Dalton, Kane County
Board member of the Utah State Board of Education	Sarah Reale
USBE Deputy Superintendent of Policy	Elisse Newey
USBE Director of Privacy	Katy Challis
USBE Director of Data and Statistics	Aaron Brough
USBE Information Technology Deputy Director	Jared Felt
USBE Chief Product Owner and Program Manager for USIMS	Katrina Brinkley

Appendix B: Focus Group Statewide SIS

In 2024, at the request of the USBE, USBE staff ran a focus group to engage a number of stakeholders on the question of a single statewide SIS. There were a number of focus groups including parents, teachers, human resources and business administrators, LEA SIS administrators, LEA leaders including superintendents and charter school directors, and technology leaders.

These focus groups were sourced through a number of avenues including the Utah State Superintendent's Association, the Parent-Teacher Association, school leader email lists, the Hope Street Teacher Fellows, technology and education technology leaders groups, human resources and business administrators email lists, LEA SIS managers lists and charter schools directors lists.

These stakeholders were asked a number of questions by USBE staff and their responses were recorded in a Padlet for further analysis.

Levels of Support for One Statewide SIS:

- Parents: Mostly in favor
- Teacher/Teacher Leaders: Mostly in favor
- HR/Business Administrators: Generally in favor, with some reservations
- LEA SIS Managers: Mixed
- Superintendents/Charter School Directors: Mixed
- Technology Leaders: Mostly opposed

Sample Stakeholder Responses from Each Level of Support:

Focus group attendees were asked to identify their level of support and explain their rationale. Exemplifying quotes from each level of support are shared below.

Strongly Favor:

"Decreased cost over time to taxpayers. Increased accessibility to services independent of the size and resources of the individual district. The opportunity to develop appropriate levels of LEA customization in the creation/selection of an SIS. Ease of access to data at the state level, decreasing the time and energy required at the LEA level." - LEA Leader

Favor:

"The SIS landscape is difficult to navigate for a smaller district. We have not found a system that provides the value and features of Aspire without putting a significant cost and support burden on us. If we go to a statewide system the knowledge base, skills growth, and standardization will help all districts be able to achieve SIS parity." - LEA SIS Manager

Somewhat Favor:

"While I can acknowledge and honor the need for autonomy in school districts as well as their diverse needs and communities, the benefit of having a basic system in which we all track the same information that can follow students from district to district far outweighs the challenges

associated with it-- especially if it's customizable by paying for/adding on complementary services while keeping the basic program free or low cost to the districts" - Teacher Leader

Neutral:

"Very concerned about the change. We are connected to [our SIS] with almost every system we use. It has taken years to customize to our needs. We hope that these discussions will be clear and in-depth and consider the difficulty of the change and all that it affects." - Human Resources/ Business Administrator

Somewhat Opposed:

"I can see benefits but many of them seem … superficial? To be clear there are some benefits that I could get behind. However I feel the costs outweigh the benefits and it's not worth forcing an LEA not already on the chosen system to switch. What an SIS is to a district and how they use it is so varying from one LEA to another that what is the perfect fit for one may be a disaster for another." - LEA SIS Manager

Opposed:

"We will do what we need to. However, I am concerned that the move will cost more, do less and take longer than expected, just like every other technology project… it seems like we can get more return on investment, by fixing UTREX, and focus on problems that will more positively help students and staff across the state." - Technology Leader

Strongly Opposed:

"I believe the needs can be met without selecting one SIS for the entire state." - LEA Leader

Top Potential Benefits Identified in the Focus Group:

Focus group attendees were asked to identify top potential benefits of a single statewide SIS. The results are summarized into a few categories below with an exemplifying quote from the meeting.

Benefit to Rural and Smaller LEAs

"I'm hopeful that a state-funded SIS system would make an equitable system for all LEAs and would allow greater efficiency and effectiveness for statewide reporting." - LEA Leader

Collaboration Between LEAs

"Ability for districts to share and solve issues" - Technology Leader

Simplified and supported student transfers

"Inter-district / LEA student record transfer. Improved staff, parent, student experience with reduced errors, reduced time locating and preparing files to send, fewer lost records, low/ no transfer cost, better statewide [statewide student identifier (SSID)] management" - SIS LEA Manager

Statewide Data and Reporting

"All the horses would be pulling in the same direction." - Human Resources/Business Administrator Leader

Cost Savings

"Funding, training, and maintenance being paid for at a state level." - LEA Leader

Enhanced Training and Understanding of the System for All Stakeholders

"I see the value of a statewide SIS system that helps improve parent, student, staff, admin, and support experience. I also see the benefit in improving data quality and integrity throughout the state with consistent collection, management, and improved collaboration opportunities." - LEA SIS Manager

Increased Transparency for Parents and Students

"If students are credit deficient in 10th grade, experience is that they never catch up, and not all schools have access to school counselors for a significant amount of time. A consistent graduation tracker would help parents and students be informed." - Parent

Critical Success Factors:

Focus group attendees were asked to identify critical factors in order to make a single statewide SIS a success. The results are summarized into a few categories below with one or more exemplifying quote(s) from the meeting.

Robust scope of work needed to meet all local needs (rural vs urban, district vs charter, etc.)

"There are subtle differences between the districts and schools throughout the state that parents have come to expect and understand. Continuing to meet those expectations and to teach our stakeholders will take a significant amount of time and energy." - Technology Leader

Significant training needed for all statewide user groups

"Moving to a new SIS will require retraining the majority of staff in the [LEA] and updating new business practices." - LEA SIS Manager

"Training needs include educators, school and LEA leaders, support staff, counselors, parents, and more." - Teacher

Multi-year runway needed to transition from existing SIS

"We have years of customizations that would need to be rebuilt." -Tech Leader

"This affects all stakeholders. This decision should NOT be taken lightly. This is probably the largest change the state could make and will have a huge domino effect at the district level." - LEA SIS Manager

Interoperability with multiple systems and data security is critical

"System interoperability... our SIS connects critical facets of our daily work together (core standards, student formative and summative data, educator data, other vendor products, SSO, SQL, etc.). Our SIS is deeply and uniquely integrated into ALMOST EVERY job critical system we use on a minute-by-minute basis." - LEA Leader

"Concerns about new capabilities and potential abuses or vulnerabilities with one database for all students in the state." - LEA Leader (echoed by parents)

Long-term contract length preferred

"The possibility of living under a 5-year cycle and changing our SIS regularly would be significant." -Tech Leader

Preferred Purchase Model of Stakeholder Focus Groups:

Focus group attendees were asked to identify their preferred purchase model if the state adopted a single statewide SIS. Purchase models included state-procured and paid, LEA-paid, or shared-cost. Focus group attendees identified their preferred payment model as state-procured and paid.

Appendix C: Average Annual SIS Expenses by LEA

LEA Name	Sis Vendor	SIS Expenses
Alpine District	Skyward	$3,935,332
Weber District	PowerSchool	$3,016,017
Davis District	Davis	$1,310,940
Cache District	PowerSchool	$1,280,000
Granite District	Focus	$778,106
Nebo District	Infinite Campus	$775,322
Grand District	PowerSchool	$754,176
Jordan District	Skyward	$620,000
Provo District	PowerSchool	$590,000
Washington District	PowerSchool	$498,000
Ogden City District	Infinite Campus	$411,164
Emery District	Aspire	$408,308
Canyons District	Skyward	$398,206
Salt Lake Academy High School	Aspire	$354,000
Tooele District	Skyward	$342,728
Carbon District	PowerSchool	$300,000
Salt Lake District	PowerSchool	$298,000
Canyon Grove Academy	Aspire	$294,000
North Sanpete District	PowerSchool	$272,000
Leadership Academy of Utah	Aspire	$226,600
Morgan District	PowerSchool	$213,500
American Preparatory Academy	Skyward	$210,818
Iron District	PowerSchool	$196,978
Sevier District	Sevier	$188,000
Vanguard Academy	PowerSchool	$181,826
Scholar Academy	Aspire	$152,000
Providence Hall	Skyward	$148,312
Utah Virtual Academy	PowerSchool	$145,000
Box Elder District	Aspire	$130,000

LEA Name	Sis Vendor	SIS Expenses
Juab District	PowerSchool	$126,000
Wasatch District	Aspire	$124,200
Duchesne District	PowerSchool	$124,188
Millard District	PowerSchool	$120,000
Roots Charter High School	Aspire	$107,700
The Center for Creativity Innovation and Discovery	PowerSchool	$92,120
Park City District	PowerSchool	$88,400
Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind	PowerSchool	$85,240
Paradigm High School	Aspire	$83,640
Freedom Preparatory Academy	PowerSchool	$80,000
American Leadership Academy	PowerSchool	$75,352
Karl G. Maeser Preparatory Academy	PowerSchool	$74,096
South Sanpete District	PowerSchool	$74,000
Renaissance Academy	Aspire	$61,816
Fast Forward High	Aspire	$60,000
Excelsior Academy	Compass	$59,134
InTech Collegiate Academy	Aspire	$48,200
Tintic District	Infinite Campus	$45,116
Venture Academy	PowerSchool	$45,038
Beehive Science & Technology Academy	Infinite Campus	$42,332
Weilenmann School of Discovery	PowerSchool	$40,000
No. UT. Acad. for Math Engineering & Science	PowerSchool	$40,000
Athenian eAcademy	Aspire	$40,000
North Summit District	PowerSchool	$38,484
Timpanogos Academy	PowerSchool	$36,000
Greenwood Charter School	Compass	$32,340
Utah International Charter School	Aspire	$28,000
South Summit District	PowerSchool	$27,000
George Washington Academy	PowerSchool	$24,800

LEA Name	Sis Vendor	SIS Expenses
Endeavor Hall	Compass	$24,800
Itineris Early College High	Aspire	$21,600
Piute District	PowerSchool	$20,000
East Hollywood High	Aspire	$20,000
American Academy of Innovation	Infinite Campus	$20,000
Ignite Entrepreneurship Academy	Aspire	$19,000
Murray District	Aspire	$16,000
Valley Academy Intermediate	Aspire	$14,000
Lumen Scholar Institute	Skyward	$13,954
Monticello Academy	Compass	$12,000
Entheos Academy	Compass	$10,550
Salt Lake Arts Academy	Aspire	$10,000
Success Academy	PowerSchool	$7,308
Canyon Rim Academy	Aspire	$6,520
Rich District	Aspire	$5,796
Vista School	Aspire	$5,574
Uintah District	Aspire	$4,000
Walden School of Liberal Arts	Aspire	$3,900
Daggett District	Aspire	$3,000
John Hancock Charter School	Aspire	$2,850
Logan City District	Aspire	$2,646
Bonneville Academy	Aspire	$2,600
Franklin Discovery Academy	Aspire	$2,300
San Juan District	Aspire	$2,000
Odyssey Charter School	Aspire	$1,760
Academy for Math Engineering & Science	Aspire	$900
Utah County Academy of Science	Aspire	$600
Terra Academy	Aspire	$40
Winter Sports School	Aspire	$0
Wayne District	Aspire	$0

LEA Name	Sis Vendor	SIS Expenses
Wasatch Waldorf Charter School	Aspire	$0
Wallace Stegner Academy	Aspire	$0
Voyage Academy	Aspire	$0
Utah Military Academy	Aspire	$0
Utah Connections Academy	Aspire	$0
Utah Arts Academy	Aspire	$0
Uintah River High	Aspire	$0
Treeside Charter School	Aspire	$0
Thomas Edison	Aspire	$0
Summit Academy	Aspire	$0
St. George Academy	Aspire	$0
Spectrum Academy	Aspire	$0
Soldier Hollow Charter School	Aspire	$0
Rockwell Charter High School	Aspire	$0
Reagan Academy	Aspire	$0
Ranches Academy	Aspire	$0
Promontory School of Expeditionary Learning	Aspire	$0
Pinnacle Canyon Academy	Aspire	$0
Pacific Heritage Academy	Aspire	$0
Ogden Preparatory Academy	Aspire	$0
North Star Academy	Aspire	$0
Noah Webster Academy	Aspire	$0
Navigator Pointe Academy	Aspire	$0
Mountainville Academy	Aspire	$0
Mountain View Montessori	Aspire	$0
Mountain Sunrise Academy	Aspire	$0
Moab Charter School	Aspire	$0
Merit College Preparatory Academy	Aspire	$0
Maria Montessori Academy	Aspire	$0
Mana Academy Charter School	Aspire	$0

LEA Name	Sis Vendor	SIS Expenses
Lincoln Academy	Aspire	$0
Legacy Preparatory Academy	Aspire	$0
Lakeview Academy	Aspire	$0
Kane District	Aspire	$0
Guadalupe School	Aspire	$0
Good Foundations Academy	Aspire	$0
Gateway Preparatory Academy	Aspire	$0
Garfield District	Aspire	$0
Esperanza School	Aspire	$0
Elevated Charter School	Aspire	$0
Edith Bowen Laboratory School	Aspire	$0
Dual Immersion Academy	Aspire	$0
Davinci Academy	Aspire	$0
City Academy	Aspire	$0
Channing Hall	Aspire	$0
C.S. Lewis Academy	Aspire	$0
Bridge Elementary School	Aspire	$0
Beaver District	Aspire	$0
Bear River Charter School	Aspire	$0
Advantage Arts Academy	Aspire	$0

Appendix D: SIS Satisfaction Levels by SIS Vendor

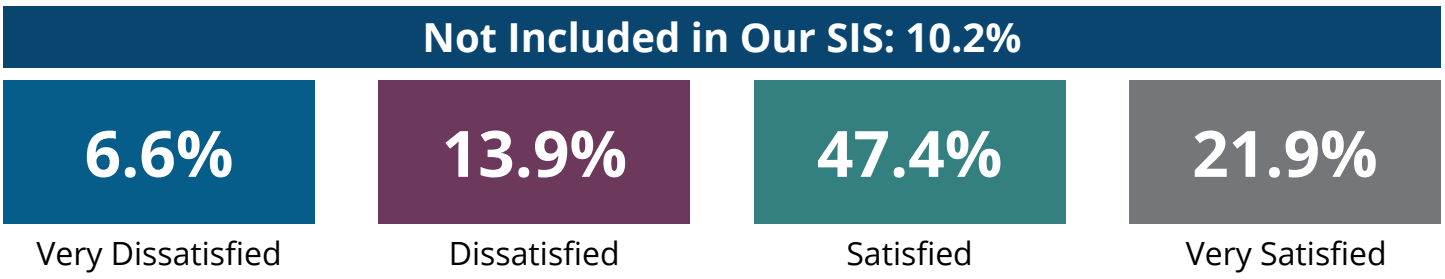
Overall Satisfaction Levels

Overall Satisfaction with SIS Capabilities:

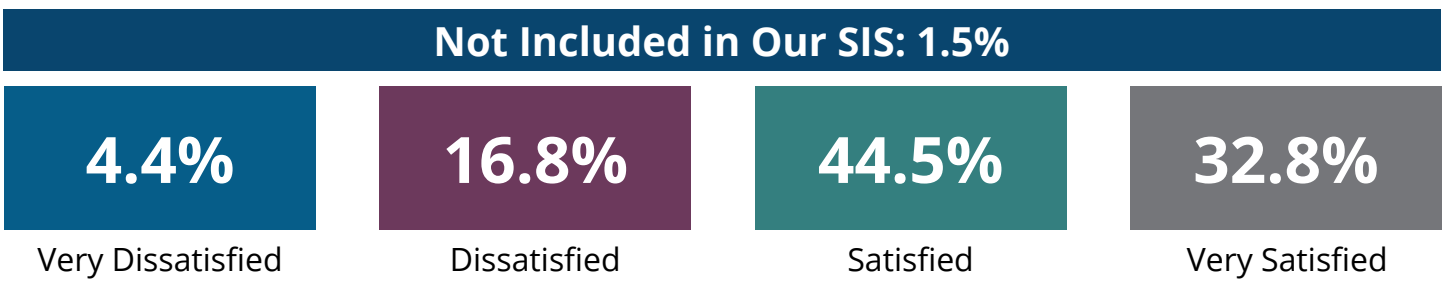
Satisfaction with Submitting Data to USBE:

Satisfaction with Reporting

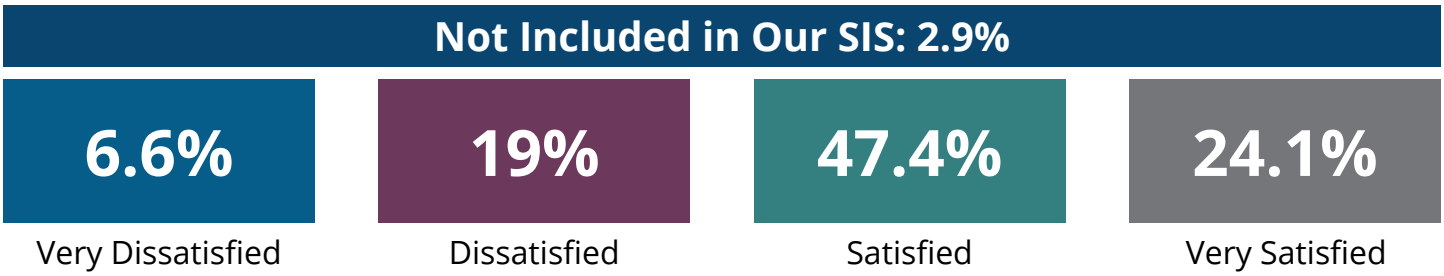
Satisfied with Tracking Individual Education Plans



Satisfaction with Grade Management



Satisfaction with Data Analytics



Satisfaction with Attendance Tracking

Satisfaction with Student Data Management

Satisfaction Levels by SIS Vendor: Aspire

Satisfaction Levels with Aspire:

1.2%	8.1%	70.9%	19.8%
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

Satisfaction with Submitting Data to USBE:

2.3%	3.5%	50%	44.2%
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

Satisfaction with Reporting

4.7%	18.6%	60.5%	16.3%
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

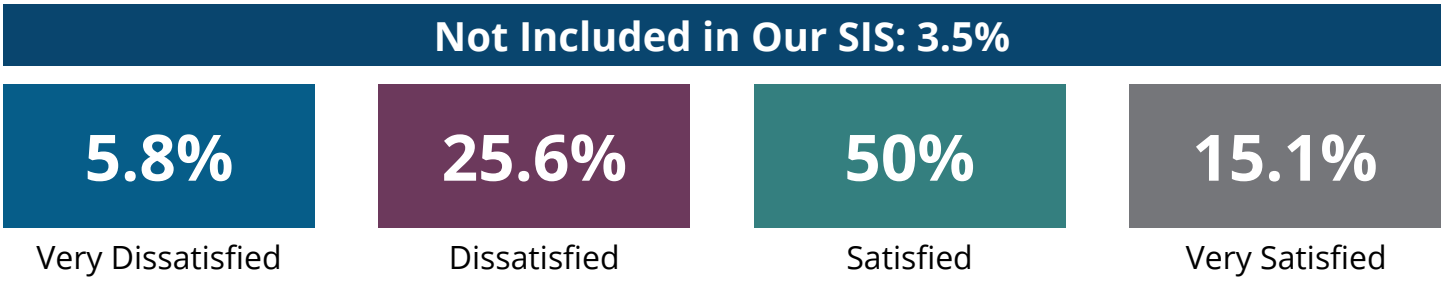
Satisfied with Tracking Individual Education Plans

Not Included in Our SIS: 2.3%			
5.8%	19.8%	55.8%	16.3%
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

Satisfaction with Grade Management

Not Included in Our SIS: 2.3%			
3.5%	23.3%	52.3%	18.6 %
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

Satisfaction with Data Analytics



Satisfaction with Attendance Tracking

Satisfaction with Student Data Management

Satisfaction Levels by SIS Vendor: Compass

Overall Satisfaction with Compass:

Satisfaction with Submitting Data to USBE:

Satisfaction with Reporting

Satisfied with Tracking Individual Education Plans

Satisfaction with Grade Management

Satisfaction with Data Analytics

Satisfaction with Attendance Tracking

Satisfaction with Student Data Management

Satisfaction Levels by SIS Vendor: Infinite Campus

Overall Satisfaction with Infinite Campus:

Satisfaction with Submitting Data to USBE:

Satisfaction with Reporting

Satisfied with Tracking Individual Education Plans

Satisfaction with Grade Management

Satisfaction with Data Analytics

Satisfaction with Attendance Tracking

Satisfaction with Student Data Management

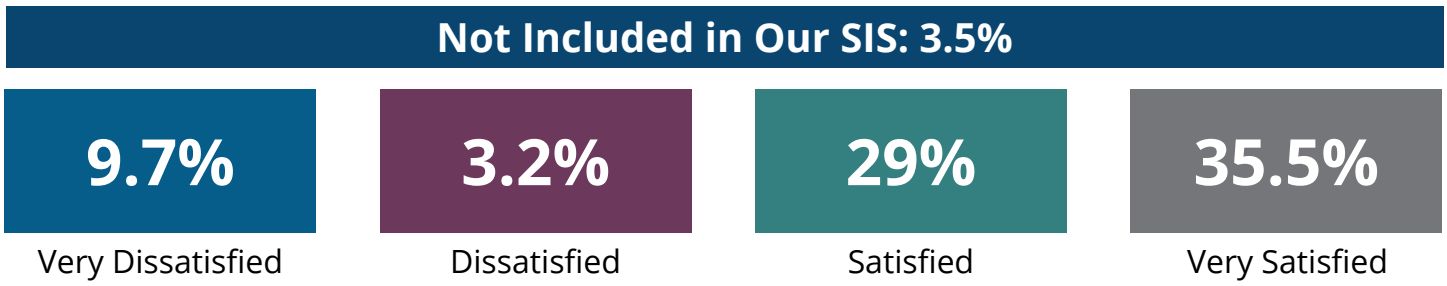
Satisfaction Levels by SIS Vendor: PowerSchool

Overall Satisfaction with PowerSchool:

Satisfaction with Submitting Data to USBE:

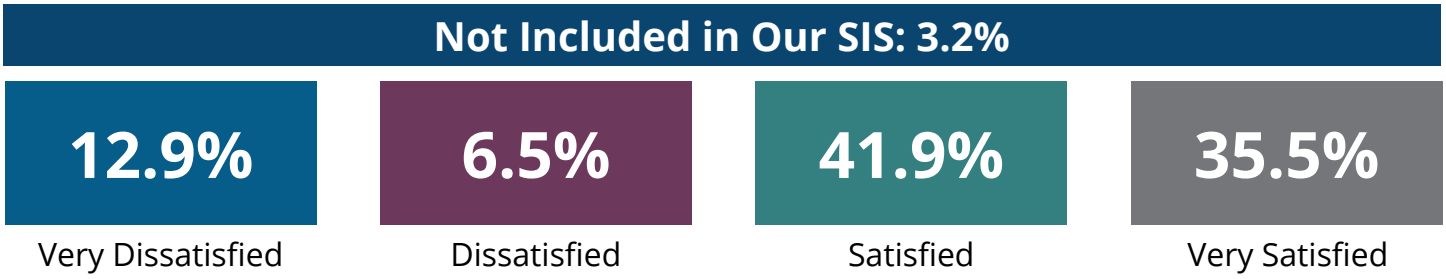
Satisfaction with Reporting

Satisfied with Tracking Individual Education Plans



Satisfaction with Grade Management

Satisfaction with Data Analytics



Satisfaction with Attendance Tracking

Satisfaction with Student Data Management

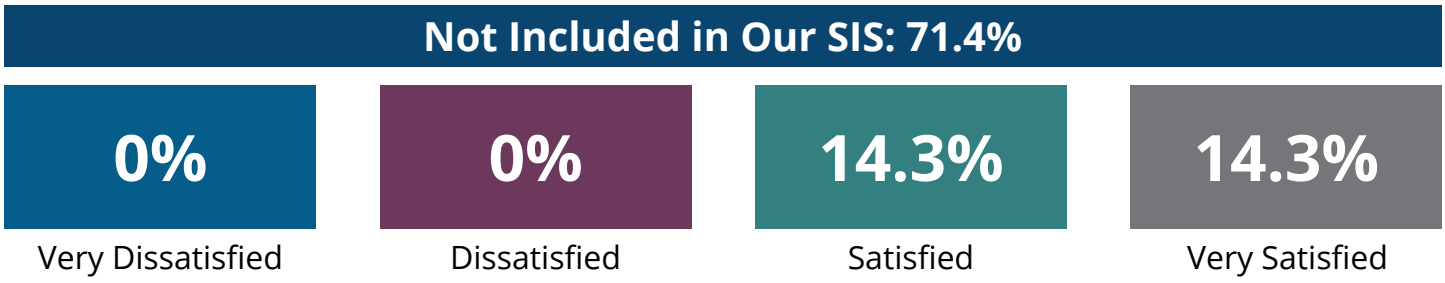
Satisfaction Levels by SIS Vendor: Skyward

Overall Satisfaction with Skyward:

Satisfaction with Submitting Data to USBE:

Satisfaction with Reporting

Satisfied with Tracking Individual Education Plans



Satisfaction with Grade Management

Satisfaction with Data Analytics

Satisfaction with Attendance Tracking

Satisfaction with Student Data Management

Satisfaction Levels by SIS Vendor: Davis

Davis reported as very satisfied for all categories.

Satisfaction Levels by SIS Vendor: Focus

The LEA who used Focus reported as satisfied for all categories except for reporting and data analytics. For those two categories they responded as dissatisfied.

Satisfaction Levels by SIS Vendor: Sevier

Sevier reported as very satisfied for all categories except for tracking IEPs they responded as satisfied.

Appendix E: Suggested Rule Changes

In the followingtables, a “Yes” indicates that the goal, relevant current rule, or proposed amendment would be pursued under that solution. Each numbered column corresponds to one of the four SIS solutions outlined in this report (pp. 66–82):

1. Status Quo with Additional Requirements
2. LEA Vendor Choice with USBE Support
3. Small Group of Approved SIS Vendors
4. Single Statewide SIS

1	2	3	4	Goal	Relevant Rule	Proposed Amendment
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Vendor Approval and enforcement	R277-484	Could amend to give USBE authority to approve vendors and revoke approval for non compliance
Yes	Yes	Yes		Vendor update timelines	None	Add requirement for vendors to implement updates within 12 months of legislative changes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	LEA Training	R277-404	Mandate specific SIS training for registrars/secretaries tied to vendor contracts
Yes	Yes			Data quality oversight	R277-484	Require SIS specific error checks and reporting tied to USIMS
Yes	Yes	Yes		Parent Transparency	None	Add baseline expectation for parents access and log in consistency
	Yes			USBE SIS Team	None	New rule establishing SIS liaison team responsibilities (training, oversight, LEA support)
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Data uploads	None	Require nightly/weekly uploads to USIMS
	Yes			LEA compliance monitoring	R277-484	Add rule mandating ongoing compliance monitoring not just annual submission
	Yes			Collaboration with legislature	None	Add rule requiring SIS team to coordinate with fiscal note process
		Yes		Vendor list	None	Create a rule limiting SIS vendors to board approved list
	Yes	Yes		Baseline system requirements	R277-484	Add baseline SIS feature requirements (EWS, parent consent, online registration)

Appendix F: Suggested Code Changes

In the followingtables, a "Yes" indicates that the goal, relevant current rule, or proposed amendment would be pursued under that solution. Each numbered column corresponds to one of the four SIS solutions outlined in this report (pp. 66–82):

1. Status Quo with Additional Requirements
2. LEA Vendor Choice with USBE Support
3. Small Group of Approved SIS Vendors
4. Single Statewide SIS

1	2	3	4	Goal	Relevant Code	Proposed Amendment
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	USBE oversight of SIS	53G-3-518(7)	Expand authority to require compatibility and vendor choice
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Data quality	None	Require ongoing data submissions with defined thresholds of error and penalties
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Vendor accountability	53E-3-401(4)	Amend to explicitly allow USBE to drop vendors for noncompliance
Yes	Yes			Vendor update timelines	None	Add requirement for vendors to comply with new laws within 12 months
Yes	Yes	Yes		Authority for USBE SIS team	None	Create statute authorizing creation of SIS support team, modeled after Data privacy team
	Yes			Enforcements of data quality	53E-9-309	Add statutory authority for USE to require continuous data quality checks.
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	LEA responsibilities	None	Add requirement or LEAs to only contract with SIS vendors approved by USBE
	Yes			Monitoring	None	Require framework for year round compliance monitoring
	Yes			Authority to approve SIS Vendors	53E-3-401	Authorize USBE to create, Oversee, and enforce a limited list of approved SIS vendors.
		Yes		Contract authority	None	Create code establishing authority for cooperative SIS contacts managed by USBE
	Yes	Yes		Funding	None	Authority to fund SIS centrally at state level

1	2	3	4	Goal	Relevant Code	Proposed Amendment
		Yes		Transition	None	Legislative mandate for phased 5 year transition
		Yes		Enforcement	None	Authority for USBE to revoke vendor contracts for noncompliance
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Strengthen data privacy requirements	53E-9-301, 53E-9-203	Add vendor use limitations, audit rights, and SIS specific security mandates.
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Empower Data Privacy Enforcement	53E-4-308	Authorize enforcement authority tied to statewide SIS vendor compliance
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Ensure ID Data Compatibility	53E-4-308	Require unique student ID use across SIS systems and LEAs
	Yes	Yes		Systemwide Data Reporting	53E-2-302	Mandate centralized data retrieval via statewide SIS for transparency and access
		Yes	Yes	Authorize Procurement and Oversight	Intent language in 2026 Budget	Create statutory language granting RFP authority, transition timelines, and oversight.

Appendix G: State Costs for Each Solution

Solution 1. Status Quo with Additional Requirements

$1,077,800 One Time Funding	$491,815 On-going Funding	$1,569,615 Total Cost
Includes: **Cost of Aspire Initial Upgrades**	Includes: **Cost of Keeping Aspire Updated**	One Time and On-going: **LEAs would continue to pay for their various SIS**

Solution 2. LEA Vendor Choice with USBE Support

$1,077,800 One Time Funding	$1,811,815 On-going Funding	$2,889,615 Total Cost
Includes: **Cost of Aspire Initial Upgrades**	Includes: **Cost of Keeping Aspire Updated and USBE Support Staff Costs**	One Time and On-going: **LEAs would continue to pay for their various SIS**

Solution 3. Small Group of Approved SIS Vendors

$3,220,167 One Time Funding	$15,102,500 On-going Funding	$18,322,667 Total Cost
Includes: **Costs associated with the first year in new vendors**	Includes: **Cost of a small group of SIS vendors for all LEAs (System licensing, training, data migration, RFP process and staff)**	One Time and On-going: **Cost of the SIS would be paid by the state**

Solution 4. Single Statewide SIS

$5,775,000 One Time Funding	$11,275,000 On-going Funding	$17,050,000 Total Cost
Includes: **Costs associated with the first year in a new vendor**	Includes: **Cost of an SIS vendor for all LEAs (System licensing, training, data migration, RFP process and staff)**	One Time and On-going: **Cost of the SIS would be paid by the state**

Appendix H: Estimated Cost of Transitioning Utah's Local Education Agencies from Aspire to a New SIS

Analysis of Factors and Projected Expenses for 101 LEAs

The cost estimate below describes the costs that would likely be associated with ending Aspire and transitioning the current LEA users to a different SIS. Transitioning 101 local education agencies (LEAs) in Utah from the Aspire student information system (SIS) to a new SIS such as PowerSchool, Skyward, or Infinite Campus is a complex and multifaceted undertaking. The total cost will depend on several factors, including software licensing, data migration, staff training, integration, support, and change management. Below is a detailed breakdown of the key cost components and considerations.

Key Cost Components

Software Licensing and Subscription Fees

Each SIS vendor (PowerSchool, Skyward, Infinite Campus) charges annual subscription or licensing fees, typically based on student count or site.

Costs vary but can range from $5 to $15 per student per year. For Utah, serving over 670,000 students, this could total $3.35 million to $10 million annually.

Data Migration

Migrating historical and live student data from Aspire to a new SIS will require specialized services. Vendors may charge per school or district, and costs could range from $5,000 to $50,000 per LEA depending on complexity and volume.

For 101 LEAs, data migration costs could total $500,000 to $5 million.

Training and Professional Development

Initial and ongoing training for SIS specialists, teachers, administrators, and support staff will be necessary. Training packages often range from $2,000 to $10,000 per LEA.

Statewide, training costs could range from $202,000 to $1 million for all LEAs.

System Integration and Customization

Ensuring a new SIS integrates with existing platforms (such as state reporting tools, transportation, lunch programs, special education solutions, etc.) is critical. This may require LEAs to hire integration developers or use vendor support.

Integration costs for each LEA may range from $5,000 to $20,000, or $505,000 to $2 million for all LEAs.

Support and Maintenance

Ongoing technical support, maintenance, and upgrades are included in annual subscription costs but may incur additional fees for premium support or custom upgrades.

LEAs would need to budget an extra 10-20% of initial implementation costs annually for support.

Staffing Adjustments

There may be a reduction in SIS specialists after initial transition, but an increase in training coordinators and integration developers during migration.

Temporary staffing costs during transition could add an estimated $2 million to $4 million.

Project Management and Change Management

Each LEA may need program management resources to oversee transition, ensuring timelines and deliverables are met.

Allocate $10,000 to $50,000 per LEA for project management ($1 million to $5 million total).

Estimated Total Cost Table

Category	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Software Licensing (Annual)	$3,350,000	$10,000,000
Data Migration (One-time	$500,000	$5,000,000
Training	$202,000	$1,000,000
Integration	$505,000	$2,000,000
Staffing Adjustments (Temporary)	$2,000,000	$4,000,000
Project Management	$1,000,000	$5,000,000
Total (First Year)	$7,557,000	$27,000,000

Additional Considerations

- Recurring Annual Costs: Subscription and support are ongoing, while migration, training, and project management are primarily one-time or transition costs.
- Economies of Scale: State-level negotiations with vendors could potentially reduce per-LEA costs via volume discounts.
- Customization: Specialized data needs, reporting mandates, and integrations may increase costs for certain districts.

Conclusion

The cost for 101 Utah LEAs to move from Aspire to a new SIS such as PowerSchool, Skyward, or Infinite Campus is projected to range from approximately $7.5 million to $27 million in the first year, with $3.35 million to $10 million recurring annual subscription costs thereafter. Exact figures depend on vendor selection, negotiated contracts, scope of implementation, staffing, and training needs. Careful planning, state-level coordination, and leveraging economies of scale will be essential to minimize costs and ensure a smooth transition for all districts.

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