

USIMS Program Management Review

Utah State Board of Education

May 2026

Executive Summary

Why USIMS Exists

USIMS was proposed to the legislature following an external study by the Division of Technology Services (DTS) recommending a build vs. buy implementation approach. The Utah State Board of Education manages education data for over 650,000 students and 36,000+ educators across 28 disparate legacy applications and subsystems. The three core legacy systems (CACTUS for educator licensing, UTREx for student data, and UPEFS for finance), along with their 25 associated subsystems, were developed on an ad-hoc basis over many years, lacked integration, and required ongoing maintenance and development resources to sustain.

These systems place a significant burden on both USBE staff and LEAs, requiring ongoing coordination to identify and correct data quality issues. SIS vendors lack sufficient validation rules on their end, which means errors in LEA data entry flow into the system and require manual remediation efforts on both sides to meet state and federal reporting requirements. Several of these systems are outdated in an absolute sense. CACTUS originated in the late 1980s, UTREx was built in the early to mid 2000s, and UPEFS dates to the early 2000s. These systems have long outlived their intended technology lifecycle, and maintaining them grows more difficult and costly every year. USIMS was designed to subsume these legacy applications, modernize our technology infrastructure, and create a unified platform built on modern data standards through EdFi for all Local Education Agencies statewide.

The Critical Constraint

USIMS operates under a hard subsumption deadline. All three legacy systems must be retired and LEAs fully transitioned to USIMS by July 1, 2027, or state FTEs will be trapped in perpetual dual-system maintenance with no contractor support. Meeting this deadline requires ruthless prioritization of all program work directly toward legacy retirement.

Any new requirement introduced during the active transition period carries significant risk to this deadline, whether originating from legislative action, board rule changes, or stakeholder requests. When implementation timelines are short, new requirements must be built into legacy systems that are actively being retired, and then built a second time in USIMS. This creates duplicate work, duplicate cost, and diverts capacity from the retirement work required to meet the deadline. The funding appropriated for USIMS was scoped to cover the original program requirements, and new requirements introduced beyond that original scope will require a separate funding request. USBE Information Technology and USBE leadership share

responsibility for consistently communicating this constraint to all stakeholders, both internal and external.

Program Status Overview

Funding Status

As of April 16, 2026:

Funding Source	Allocated	Spent to Date	Encumbered	Uncommitted Remaining
State Funds	\$22,946,645.60	\$13,948,371.15	\$2,540,629.08	\$6,457,645.37
COVID Funds	\$16,300,000.00	\$16,308,265.98	\$0	\$0 (fully expended)
Total	\$39,246,645.60	\$30,256,637.13	\$2,540,629.08	\$6,457,645.37

Program Status by Domain

Educator Domain

What's Live

All prospective educators statewide now use USIMS for background checks, ethics reviews, professional license renewals, and license printing. Associate and LEA-Specific License renewals and printing are handled in-house. All ten university educator preparation programs are submitting licensure recommendations through the system.

What We're Building

The soft release has closed to allow the team to focus on validating enhanced assignment and employment functionality, enabling LEAs to submit LEA-Specific License area/endorsement requests, and improving data synchronization between systems.

Since the closure of the soft release, the team has refocused on delivering educator data into USIMS. Efforts are currently centered on ensuring the most recent license information from the legacy system is accurately reflected in USIMS, clearly distinguishing between current and historical license details, and incorporating Employment (Experience) History. In addition, working on when an Educator Preparation Program is accepted by an educator, the associated LEA-Specific License or Associate License is moved to historical license information. This work is key to supporting data integration and maintaining data integrity.

Challenges and Risks

The volume of CACTUS features requiring migration remains the primary risk to meeting the July 1, 2027, legacy retirement date. The team is mitigating this risk through focused reorganization and continuous validation with stakeholders and Subject Matter Experts as functionality is delivered.

In parallel, we are prioritizing critical features over nice-to-have enhancements, completing essential requirements first while identifying workarounds for lower-priority requests.

Target Legacy Retirement Date: July 1, 2027

Student Domain

What's Live

Aspire is actively using Student Backpack assessment data across all 101 districts. The infrastructure required to receive, validate, and surface student data from LEAs has been built incrementally, with features released to LEAs as the underlying infrastructure is ready rather than as a single statewide rollout. Six of eight SIS solutions are actively integrating and testing enrollment history, assessment results, growth scores, demographics, and attendance data through the Student Backpack. Additionally, 33 LEAs are scheduled to go live with the Student Backpack in the month of May..

What We're Building

The team has begun the work to absorb UTREx functionality in USIMS and is currently working on the ability to bring LEA student data submissions into USIMS. While the primary focus for the Student Domain will be on absorbing UTREx functionality, we will continue to support SIS vendors' implementation of all the Student Backpack data already available for critical issues.

Challenges and Risks

Three risks affect the Student Domain: additional functionality discovered during the replacement of UTREx will need to be accounted for and addressed; addressing competing priorities during UTREx subsumption; and the need for SIS vendor support to quickly resolve critical bugs blocking SIS Student Backpack integration. These risks are mitigated through regular roadmap reviews, collaboration with UTREx experts, and focused coordination with management, SIS vendors and USBE stakeholders to prioritize only the most critical issues so UTREx Subsumption efforts can continue in earnest.

Target Legacy Retirement Date: July 1, 2027

Finance Domain

What's Live

Chart of Accounts and Account Combination viewing and management have been validated by USBE Finance staff and are deployed into Production. They will be released to the Finance Working Group (FWG) users once they can be routed to a dedicated landing page.

Eight vendors are connecting to the Finance API:

- One vendor has successfully submitted data for their pilot LEA
- Three vendors have submitted data and are working through ensuring that all accounts and amounts are accurately submitted in USIMS.
- Another vendor has stated they're almost ready to submit pilot LEA data
- The other vendors are working on their connections to the USIMS Finance API

What We're Building

Additional work includes microservices architecture updates for the Finance API. We've completed an initial round of validation, and are addressing a couple of findings before sharing the updates to 3rd Party Finance Vendors.

The Finance team is updating the filtering and usage of Power BI dashboards after getting user feedback and is also building a "wrapper" to allow USIMS LEA users to see the data submitted in USIMS.

In addition to seeing Account & Account Combination information in Power BI dashboards, the Finance team has built this functionality within the USIMS UI. We've shared this with USBE Finance, and using this feedback to update this functionality.

Challenges and Risks

The Finance domain is moving deliberately given the scale of funding dependent on accurate data reporting. The Finance API supports reporting for billions in Federal and Utah funding across eight external vendors and all LEAs, which means vendor timelines and data confirmation add complexity to the testing cycle.

The routing to a Finance landing page to access relevant features directly is dependent on completing the Finance user card. The team is targeting a May/June rollout for Account and Account Combination Searches to a few users first to confirm the functionality, then roll it out across to all Finance users at that point.

Target Legacy Retirement Date: End of FY 2027