

USBE Legislative Request Form

(Policy, Funding, & Efficiency / Reductions)

2027 General Session

SECTION 1: THE BOTTOM LINE

Request Title: Parent and LEA Hotline Support

USBE Lead Point of Contact:

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- USBE Section: Internal Audit Department

Deputy Superintendent Reviewer: NA

Nature of Request (Select all that apply):

☐ **Policy Change:** Creating, amending, or repealing Utah State Code.
(Complete Section 4)

☒ **New/Increased Funding:** Seeking new financial resources.
(Complete Section 3)

☐ **Efficiency / Reduction:** Proposing the elimination or reduction of a program, mandate, or funding stream. (Complete Section 3 and/or 4)

Purpose Statement (BLUF - Bottom Line Up Front):

We are requesting \$150,000 in ongoing funding to support efficient and effective maintenance of the Public Education Hotline used to intake concerns from parents, students and educators on behalf of local education agencies (LEAs); as well as to respond to parents, students and educators, refer concerns to LEAs, and train and provide technical assistance to LEA personnel on hotline concerns and investigations.

SECTION 2: THE BUSINESS CASE

The Problem:

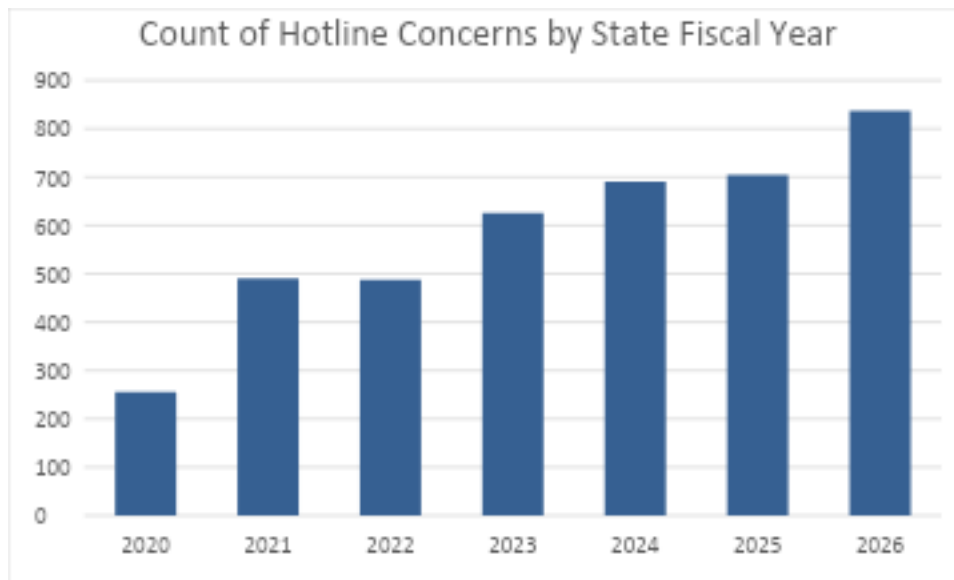
The risk exposure to the Utah State Board of Education (Board) and State of Utah (e.g., perception, risk management, and legal liability), as well as students (and their families) and educators (e.g., safety, proficiency) in the public education system, is increasing as evidenced by the increasing number of concerns received on the Public Education Hotline (Hotline). Due to the increase, the Internal Audit Department does not have capacity to maintain the same level of support provided to parents, students, teachers, and LEAs with existing resources.

Additional Context

The vision and mission of public education includes opening the doors of opportunity for all Utah children and statute recognizes that public education supports parents in the education of their children. The Board is also responsible for promoting high-quality education through its role as the licensing body for educators.

The Board is required by statute (53E-3-401(8)(a)-(e)) to provide a method for an individual to bring a violation of statute or board rule to the attention of the state board and regarding reviewing and investigating alleged compliance issues. The current method is the Public Education Hotline (Hotline). Several specific statutes (53G-2-103(8), 53G-2-105(6), 53G-2-105(6), 53G-10-103(8)(b)) direct individuals to report violations using this method.

The chart below evidences the use of the Hotline, which is up approximately 20% for state fiscal year 2026 (through 5/28/2026).



Concerns related to LEAs received on the Hotline have been specific to 115 different LEAs, which represents approximately 70% of LEAs statewide.

Concerns also evidence communication with and information provided to parents, students, and educators, which represent approximately 80% of individuals submitting concerns (i.e., approximately 57% of concerns come from parents/guardians/family members, 18% come from public education employees, and 4% come from students).

Projected Results:

- Decreased Hotline response and referral timelines
- Increased availability of training materials

Consequence of Inaction:

- Increased risk (e.g., safety, legal, financial) to the state of Utah, school communities, and families as Hotline concerns are not handled effectively or timely.

- Decreased time for other functions of Internal Audit Department, such as audits that inform policymaking (e.g., Attendance, USDB, CTE).

Cost-Neutral Alternatives:

As a cost-neutral policy alternative to increased state funding, the Board could support legislative amendments to state code alongside updates to Board Rule R277-123 to refine the scope and volume of the Public Education Hotline. Under this statutory approach, state code would be amended to require Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to establish and maintain their own separate, autonomous hotlines, prohibiting LEAs from utilizing the USBE statewide hotline as a proxy for local complaints. Furthermore, legislative changes would mandate that the State Charter School Board (SCSB) maintain a dedicated hotline for matters distinctly within its jurisdiction, specifically charter governance and fidelity to a school's approved charter. Concurrently, Board Rule R277-123 would be redrafted to limit the role of the Internal Audit Department, transitioning intake, investigation, and case ownership directly into appropriate operational agency divisions supported by an integrated case management system. Together, these statutory code updates and rule revisions would significantly reduce state-level hotline call volume, streamlining workflows across agencies and eliminating the need for additional state FTE funding.

Evidence & Data:

This request is for an investment of .002% (\$157K) of the public education system budget of \$8.9 billion for an additional Hotline Specialist.

A few examples of responses the Internal Audit Department has received from individuals that have contacted the Hotline evidences that the current approach is having a positive impact, and that an investment to maintain this level of service will be valuable to parents, students, educators, LEAs, and policymakers.

- *"Dear Person Who Took the Time To Write Such a Thorough Response To My Last Email,
You are my hero! Thank you so much for your response to my inquiry email. I'm sure it took so much time out of an already busy day..."*

- *"Dear USBE Internal Audit Team,
Thank you for your assistance and for referring my concerns...I sincerely appreciate your time, guidance, and the care you have taken to ensure this matter is directed to the appropriate entities."*
- *"Dear Internal Audit Department,
I would also like to express my sincere gratitude for the additional resources and guidance you shared. Your response was helpful and provided important direction during a moment of significant concern for my family."*
- *"Thank you! ... I sincerely appreciate how quickly you responded and for giving me so much helpful information."*

Another proof of approach is the action LEAs have taken, or are taking, in response to Hotlines or hotline related actions that improves accountability and transparency of policies and processes with parents and students.

Examples include:

- After receiving a hotline referral, a charter school hired a firm to investigate. The referral and investigation have led to a several months-long effort to update policies and the LEA's investigation protocols specific to student bullying.
- After receiving a Notification of Noncompliance, a large LEA designed and implemented a policy about how it will respond to and resolve concerns; thus, providing transparency to parents, students, and educators. Prior to this notification, the LEA did not have a policy.
- After receiving a Notification of Noncompliance, several LEAs have either established a local hotline and made it available on their LEA/school websites or the LEAs link to the state's Public Education Hotline on their LEA/school websites.

Finally, given the above it is reasonable to assume that if an additional Hotline Specialist were hired, additional positive outcomes would be evident as the Internal Audit Department would have capacity that it currently lacks to do additional analysis of available Hotline data and provide training accordingly.

SECTION 3: FUNDING, OFFSETS, & EFFICIENCIES

Financial Ask:

- **FY 2027 Ongoing Requested:** \$150,000
- **FY 2027 One-Time Requested:** \$7,000
- **Proposed Offsets / Savings:** \$0

The Offset Strategy:

There are no additional efficiencies within the Internal Audit Department that would yield sufficient funds for this request.

Future Obligations:

Does this request create multi-year scale-up costs or ongoing maintenance obligations?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If yes, please describe: _____

Itemized Budget Request:

(Please detail how the funding will be utilized across the following categories).

Cost Category	FY 2027 (Current)	FY 2028
Wages and Benefits/Indirect Costs	\$0	\$150,000
Data Processing Hardware/Supplies/Other Setup Costs	\$0	\$7,000

TOTAL REQUESTED	\$0	\$157,000
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New USBE FTEs Requested: 1 (Enter number of new FTEs)
