

Below is a summary of the specified bills and the potential reasons for support from the public education sector.

House Bills (HB)

- **HB42: School Cybersecurity Amendments (Wilcox)**
 - **Explanation:** Establishes minimum cybersecurity standards for Local Education Agencies (LEAs), requiring specific measures like strong authentication, regular patch management, and immutable backups. It also expands the Utah Cyber Center's duties to support LEAs and requires coordination with the Utah Education and Telehealth Network.
 - **Public Education Support:** Public education would support this to ensure that sensitive student and staff personal data is effectively protected across all districts, regardless of their size or budget.
- **HB75: American Indian and Alaska Native Education Amendments (Watkins)**
 - **Explanation:** Modifies definitions and expands authorized expenditures for a grant program targeted at the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students. It also addresses the adoption of a state education plan for these student populations.
 - **Public Education Support:** This bill allows for more flexible and targeted use of grant funds to better meet the specific academic and cultural needs of Indigenous students.
- **HB143: Special Education Amendments (K. Peterson)**
 - **Explanation:** Requires LEAs to provide at least 30 days' written notice to parents before relocating a student's special education class due to boundary or assignment changes. It mandates that LEAs consider and document parent comments before a final decision is made.
 - **Public Education Support:** Supporters believe this ensures parents are integral partners in placement decisions, providing a transparent process for families of students with disabilities.
- **HB144: School Community Council Amendments (Miller)**
 - **Explanation:** Updates council duties to include advising on safe technology use and digital citizenship. It also allows councils to adjust their size via a majority vote (provided parents outnumber employees by at least two) and clarifies election procedures.
 - **Public Education Support:** This strengthens parent participation and streamlines the collaborative process between families and educators in shaping school programs and safety principles.
- **HB163: Grow Your Own Educator Pipeline Program Amendments (Wilcox)**
 - **Explanation:** Expands scholarship eligibility within the "Grow Your Own" program to include licensed teachers who are pursuing special education endorsements.
 - **Public Education Support:** This provides a critical pathway to address the shortage of special education teachers by incentivizing current educators to gain additional credentials.

- **HB236: Truth in Taxation Amendments (K. Peterson)**

- **Explanation:** Modifies the process for increasing property taxes by requiring taxing entities to hold preliminary public meetings and present alternative tentative budgets that do not include the proposed increase.
- **Public Education Support:** While often viewed as a constraint, proponents argue it increases transparency and public trust in how local education funding decisions are made.

Senate Bills (SB)

- **SB25: Retirement Modifications (Harper)**

- **Explanation:** Makes technical changes to public employee retirement, including adding representatives from school districts and local school boards to the Membership Council (increasing it from 15 to 18 members).
- **Public Education Support:** This ensures school districts have a direct voice and better representation on the council that oversees retirement benefits for educators.

- **SB43: Land Trusts Protection and Advocacy Office Amendments (Owens)**

- **Explanation:** Clarifies the Advocacy Office's role as the primary representative of trust beneficiaries and establishes accountability requirements for the use of trust distributions following a legislative audit.
- **Public Education Support:** This strengthens the management of School Land Trusts, ensuring these funds are used responsibly to maximize long-term revenue for public schools.

- **SB51: School Safety Modifications (Owens)**

- **Explanation:** Creates a statewide system for the State Board of Education to collect and share information regarding student threats between LEAs, including a statewide student threat "flag."
- **Public Education Support:** This facilitates better communication between schools when students transfer, allowing for proactive safety measures while maintaining student privacy protections.

- **SB52: Substitute Teaching Requirements Amendments (Fillmore)**

- **Explanation:** Removes the requirement that long-term substitute teachers (those serving more than 20 days) must hold a teaching license, though it still requires districts to prioritize licensed educators when available.
- **Public Education Support:** This provides schools with much-needed flexibility to keep classrooms staffed during educator shortages when licensed substitutes are unavailable.

- **SB69: School Devise Revisions (Fillmore)**

- **Explanation:** Changes the default standard for personal device use from "prohibited during instructional time" to "prohibited during the school day."
- **Public Education Support:** This aims to reduce distractions and improve student focus by establishing a consistent, "bell-to-bell" cellphone prohibition across the entire school day.
- **SB107: Education Legislation Advisory Commission Amendments (Stratton)**
 - **Explanation:** Creates a commission to study education issues and provide feedback to the legislature on proposed education-related laws.
 - **Public Education Support:** This provides a formal venue for education experts and stakeholders to offer insights on the practical impacts of proposed legislation before it becomes law.
- **SB241: Early Literacy (Millner)**
 - **Explanation:** Sets a statewide goal of 80% of third-graders reading on grade level by 2030 and requires schools to implement individualized reading plans and interventions based on the "science of reading."
 - **Public Education Support:** This bill provides resources for literacy coaching and evidence-based instruction to ensure every student has the foundational skills needed for long-term academic success.
